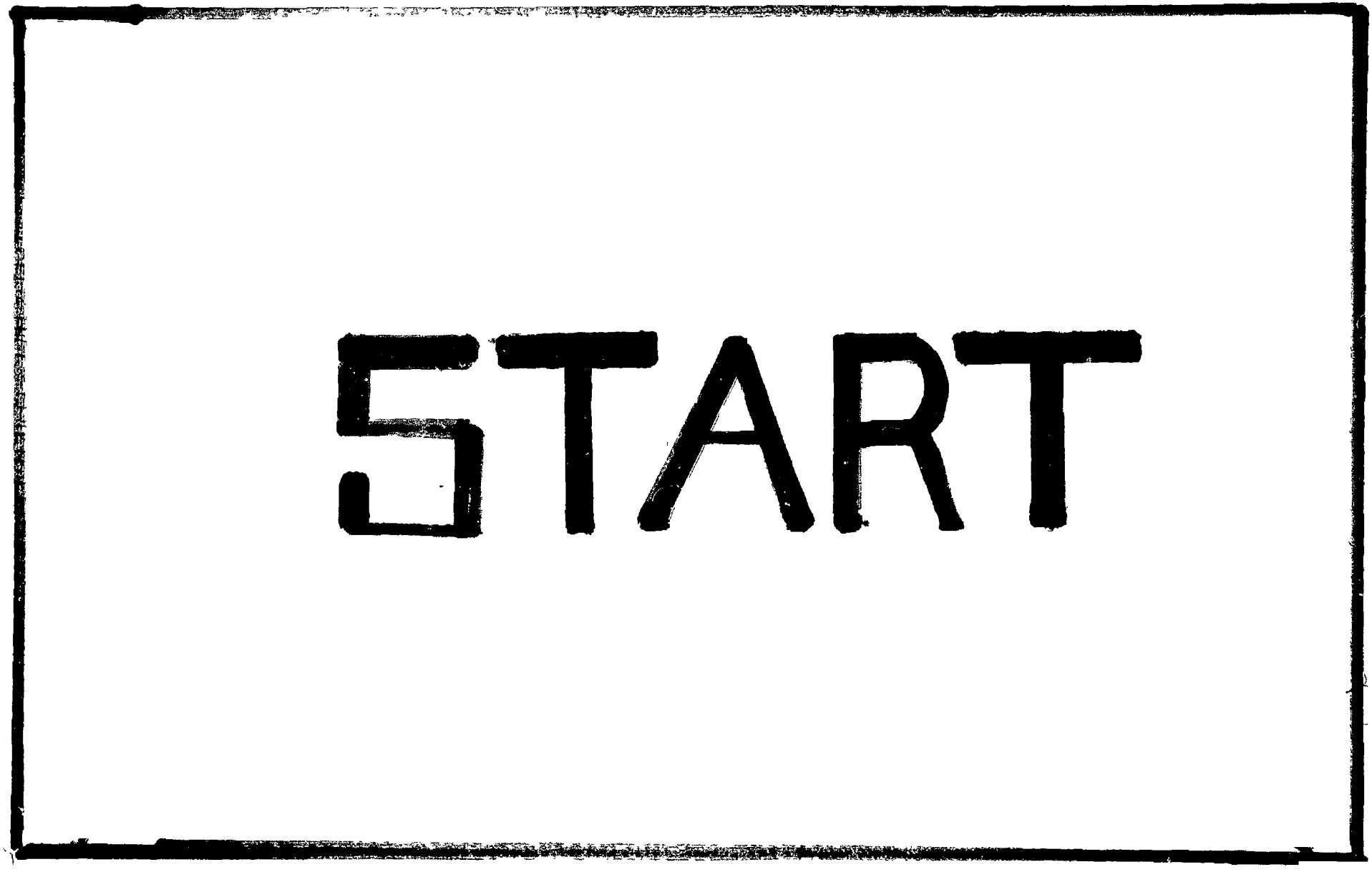
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Continuation of The Experience of A planter in the Jungles of Mysore Vol. I - chapter - VI of page No. 222.

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CHAPTER VI.

CASTE.

In Krilof's fable of "The Peasant and the Horse," the latter murmurs at the way his master throws oats broadcast on the soil. How much better, argues the horse, it would have been to have kept them in his granary, or even to have given them me to eat! But the oats grew, and in due time are garnered, and from them the same horse is fed the year following. The horse, as we have seen, was unable to comprehend the working and the meaning of his master's acts; and, in the same way, we often see that man equally fails to comprehend the nature and effect of things around him. And thus it is, and for long has been, as regards the institution I am now about to consider. People in general have ignorantly murmured at the institution of caste; and having ever looked at it with highly-civilised spectacles, and having seen especially a number of the inconveniences it has caused to the educated population of the towns, it has been argued that caste is the curse of all India. But it seems to me that an attentive, unprejudiced examination tends to prove that in former times it was exactly the reverse, and that at the present moment, as far as all the ignorant rural population is concerned, it may be considered, with reference to the

state of the people, as a valuable and useful institution.

And here, at the outset, I wish it to be clearly understood that an immense divergence has taken place between the town and country populations of India. The former have advanced with rapid strides on the paths of enlightenment and progress, while the latter, it is hardly too much to say, have remained almost universally stationary. To argue, therefore, from one to the other is not only impossible, but absurd; and it is merely a waste of time to point out, at any length, that what may be admirably suited to one set of people may be a positive nuisance to another. With reference, then, to this question of caste, instead of treating India as a whole, I shall divide it into town and country populations. In the first place, I shall treat of the effects of caste on the country populations, amongst whom I have lived; and, in the second place, I shall offer some considerations regarding the effects of the institution amongst the people of the towns.

And, first of all, as to its effects on the rural population.

In these observations on caste I shall not commence with any attempt to trace its origin, nor shall I endeavour to enumerate the countless forms it has assumed amongst the peoples of the great peninsula. My aim is to direct the attention of the reader not to the dry bones of its history so much as to the living effects of the institution. It is certainly a matter of interest to know something of the peculiar customs of the various tribes and races; but it is to be regretted that people generally have rested content with information of that sort, and have seldom attempted to investigate those points which

are, I conceive, mainly of use and interest. What Indians may or may not do—what they may eat, what they may drink, and what clothing they may put on—are not matters on which inquirers should bestow much time. The information most needed, and which has not yet, or only in the most imperfect sense, been acquired, is as to what caste has done for good or evil. It shall be my endeavour to solve that question; and I imagine the solution would be in a great measure effected if I could, in the first instance, answer satisfactorily the following questions:—

1. How far has caste acted as a moral restraint amongst the Indians themselves?

2. How far advantageously or the reverse in segregating them socially from the conquerors who have overrun their country?

On the first of these points I may observe, without the slightest exaggeration, that very few of our countrymen indeed have had such opportunities as myself of forming a correct opinion; for very few Englishmen have been so entirely dependent on a native population for society. For the first four or five years of my residence in Munzerabad there were only three Europeans besides myself, and we were all about twelve miles apart. The natural consequence was that the farmers of the country were my sole companions; and, as I joined in their sports and had some of them always about me, terms of intimacy sprang up which never could have existed under any other circumstances. And further, when it is taken into consideration that I have employed the poorer of the better castes in various capacities on my estates, and a large number of the Pariahs, or labourer caste, it seems pretty clear that I ought to be a tolerably

competent judge as to whether caste did or did not exercise a favourable influence on the morals of the people. Now, as regards one department of morals, at least, I unhesitatingly affirm that it did, and that, as regards the connection of the sexes, it would be difficult to find in any part of the world a more moral people than the two higher castes of Munzerabad, who form about one-half of the population, and who may be termed the farming proprietors of the country. Amongst themselves, indeed, it was not to be wondered at that their morality was extremely good, as, from the fact of nearly every one being married at the age of puberty, and partly, perhaps, from the fact of their houses being more or less isolated, instead of being grouped in villages, the temptations to immorality were necessarily slight. Their temptations, though, as regards the Pariahs, who were, when I entered Munzerabad, merely hereditary serfs, were considerable; and there it was that the value of caste law came in. Caste said, You shall not touch these women; and so strong was this law, that I never knew of but one instance of one of the better classes offending with the Pariah women. Some aversion of race there might, no doubt, have been, but the police of caste and its penalties were so strong that he would be a bold man indeed who would venture to run any risk of detection. To give an idea of how the punishment for an offence of this kind would operate, it may be added that, if one of the farming classes in this country, on a case of seducing one of the lower, was fined by his neighbours £500, and cut by society till he paid the money, he would be in exactly the same

* And that, I may observe, was a case in which a tody-drawer, the third caste in Munzerabad, was concerned.

position as a Munzerabad farmer would be who had violated the important caste law under consideration. Here, therefore, we have a moral police of tremendous power, and the very best proof we have of the regularity with which it has been enforced lies in the fact that the Pariahs and the farmers are distinguished by a form and physiognomy almost as distinct as those existing between an Englishman and a negro. And, with the view of showing the reader how great the difference is, I have had the upper classes and Pariahs engraved side by side. From the absence of colouring, the difference is not, of course, nearly so apparent as it would otherwise be, but it is sufficient to show the races have been kept quite distinct; and I hardly think it would be possible to find a Pariah who could be mistaken for one of the farmer class. Caste, then, as we have seen, protects the poor from the passions of the rich, and it equally protects the upper classes themselves, and enforcedly makes them more moral than, judging from our experience in other quarters of the globe, they would otherwise be.

Having thus briefly glanced at caste law, as controlling the connection of the sexes, let us now look at it from another point of view, which I venture to think is, as regards its ultimate consequences, of even still more importance. If there is one vice more than another which is productive of serious crime, it is the abuse of alcohol; and there is no doubt that, to use the words of an eminent statesman, "if we could subtract from the ignorance, the poverty, the suffering, the sickness, and the crime now witnessed among us, the ignorance, the poverty, the sickness, and the crime caused by the single vice of drinking, this country would be so changed for

the better that we should hardly know it again." Regarding it, then, in all its consequences, whether physical or mental (and how many madmen and idiots are there not bred by drinking?*), it is difficult to estimate too highly the value of caste laws that utterly prohibit the use of those strong drinks that are injurious in any country, but are a thousand times more so under the rays of a tropical sun. And when we come to consider that one-fourth of the population of Munzerabad are absolutely compelled to abstain from the use of alcohol, and that these being the very best, or at least equal to the very best, of the community, must always have exercised a large influence in discouraging the excessive use of intoxicating drinks, it is impossible to refrain from coming to the conclusion that this single fact is more than sufficient to counterbalance all the evils that have ever been said to arise from caste.

On two very important points, then—the connection of the sexes and the use of alcohol—it is evident that caste laws have produced some very favourable and valuable results; but I do not think we can accurately gauge their value unless we compare the state of morality existing in Munzerabad with the state of morality existing in one of our home counties; and the comparison I have to make, if not very soothing, is, I am sure, very interesting. Take any one of our counties in Great Britain, for instance, and compare it with Munzerabad as regards the points I have particularly referred to, and it will be found that Munzerabad has an immense superiority. The crimes and

* I observe in the Administration Report for Mysore, 1867-68, that nearly all the cases in the lunatic asylum were traced either to drinking or bhang-smoking.

misery arising from drinking are hardly to be found at all in Munzerabad, while the morality of the sexes, I should think, could hardly be surpassed. Now, there is nothing very surprising, considering that the people in this country are so heavily weighted, that this should be the case; on the contrary, it is the natural result of the circumstances of their worldly situation. But, supposing that the worldly situation as to the means of support and the opportunities of marrying were equal, it seems to me perfectly plain that the people who have fifty per cent. of the better classes (one-fourth of the population, it must be remembered) total abstainers, and who have their society so controlled that the rich cannot gratify their passions at the expense of the poor, must be in the possession of a superior morality.

It will be observed that I have said, any county in Great Britain, and I say so to the exclusion of Ireland, because I am informed that in that country the morality of the sexes is a great deal better than in either England or Scotland. I have no particular evidence before me to show that this is the case, but it may be inferred deductively with perfect accuracy, because the interests of the priests are on the side of a large population. The sentiment of sexual morality has, therefore, been worked up for generations. Early marriages, and consequently fewer temptations, naturally resulted. Irregularities were naturally rarer, and those that did occur, being without excuse, were severely condemned by society, and it is certain must have been tremendously censured by the priests. Hence, and aided, no doubt, by the potato and small allotments, your Irish virtue. And as neither machinery nor causes of the same sort existed in England or Scotland for the

improvement of this branch of morality, it is necessarily inferior.*

Before closing this branch of the subject, I may allude briefly to what has been so often attacked by the opponents of caste: I mean the prohibition of the marriage of widows. This rule exists in Munzerabad, but I am not aware that any great moral evil arises from it, as a widow can always contract to live with a man, the difference being that the ceremonies performed are of an inferior kind. This is not allowed to be a marriage, but, in fact, it is a marriage,† but of a kind held in very low estimation. On customs like these, which in a great measure neutralise the evils arising from the restrictions on re-marriage, it seems to me that our information is very scanty, and I am not aware how far the practice alluded to prevails in other parts of India.

Having taken into consideration the advantages of caste in acting as a moral restraint amongst the Indians themselves, I now purpose to inquire how far caste has acted advantageously, or the reverse, in segregating the people socially from the conquerors who have overrun their country.

If the advantages of caste are striking and plainly apparent as regards the moral points I have alluded to, they seem to me to be infinitely more so when we come to consider the happy influence this institution has had in segregating the Indians from the white races. And

* I have since been informed by a Scotch clergyman that the sexual morality of the true Celtic Highlanders is very good, far superior to that existing in other parts of Scotland. Many of these people are Roman Catholics, it may be observed. My informant was at a loss in any way to account for the superior morality of those who had become Protestants. Should these statements be well founded, it would certainly be interesting to inquire why these people should be possessed of a superior morality.

† See chap. ii. p. 84.

here I cannot help indulging in a vain regret that the blessings of caste have not been universally diffused amongst all inferior races. How many of these has our boasted civilisation improved off the face of the earth? How much has that tide of civilisation which the first conquerors invariably bring with them effected? How much, in other words, have their vice, rum, and gunpowder helped to exterminate those unhappy races which, unprotected by caste, have come in contact with the white man? Nor in India itself are we altogether without a well-marked instance of the value, for a time at least, of an entire social separation between the dark and white races; and the Todas, the lords of the soil on the Neilgherry Hills, furnish us with a lamentable example of what the absence of caste feeling is capable of producing. We found them a simple pastoral race, and the early visitors to the hills were struck with their inoffensive manners, and what was falsely considered to be their greatest advantage—freedom from caste associations. But what is their condition now? One of drunkenness, debauchery, and disease of the most fatal description. Had the much-reviled caste law been theirs, what a different result would have ensued from their contact with Europeans! Caste would have saved them from alcohol, and their women from contamination; they would thus have maintained their self-respect; and if, at first, separation brought no progress nor shadow of change, it would have at least induced no evil, and education and enlightenment would in time have modified these caste institutions which, to a superficial observer, seem to be productive of nothing but evil.

We have now seen that social contact with whites,

without any barrier between them and the inferior races, is not, in a moral point of view, a very desirable thing in any part of the world. But if there is a moral consequence, we may also point to a mental one which exercises an immense influence: I mean the overwhelming sense of inferiority which is so apt to depress casteless races. I believe, then, for savages, or for people in a low state of civilisation, it is of the greatest importance that they should have points of difference which may not only keep them socially apart, but which may enable them to maintain some feeling of superiority when coming in contact with highly-civilised races. Nor is it necessary that the feeling of superiority should be well founded. An imaginary superiority will, I believe, answer the purpose equally well. "We don't touch beef, nor would we touch food cooked by Englishmen or Pariahs," seem but poor matters for self-congratulation. But if these considerations prevent a man from forming a poor opinion of himself, they should be carefully cherished. On these points, at least, a feeling of superiority is sustained, and therefore the tendency to degradation is diminished. But if on all points the white man makes his superiority felt, the weaker people speedily acquire a thorough contempt for themselves, and soon become careless of what they do, or of what becomes of them. Their mental spring becomes fatally depressed, and this circumstance has probably more to do with the deterioration and extinction of inferior races than most people would be inclined to admit.* Nothing, then, I believe, chills the soul and checks the progress of man so much as a hopeless sense of inferiority; and, had I time, I might turn the atten-

* *Vide* Sproat's "Studies of Savage Life."

how, then, can it be for one moment asserted that the tendency of caste is to check the progress of the people?

Having thus glanced at some of the effects of caste institutions as they affect the rural population, we will now consider caste as it affects the people of the towns. Following, then, the same order, and directing our attention to the same points selected for consideration when treating of the rural classes, let us ask how far caste has operated with the townspeople as regards the connection of the sexes and the use of alcohol. And here we shall find that the subject may be dismissed in almost a single sentence; for caste laws, as regards these points, can never act as a moral restraint, because the possibility of enforcing them cannot and does not exist. Nor need I waste time in proving that people in towns, whether in India or any other part of the world, may readily do things which could never escape the prying eyes of a country society.

Then, as regards the segregation from foreigners, it is evident that we need employ little time, for such of the town populations as have maintained a fair state of morality amid the evils of large cities are not likely to be materially affected by the bad habits and customs of the white races; and as for those who have never led a steady life, it would not much matter with whom they mixed. But caste not only brings with it no good as far as the town population is concerned, but its continuance is fraught with a multitude of painful and vexatious evils, which meet us at every turn, for it hampers the actions, and clogs those efforts at progress which are the natural result of intellectual advancement. And here I cannot do better than quote the words of a Parsee gentleman, whose unceasing efforts to aid the progress

tion of the reader to the universality of this law, and to the numerous instances that have been collected to prove the depressing and injurious effects that even nature, on a grand and overwhelming scale, seems to exercise on the mind and spirit of man—how it makes him timid, credulous, and superstitious, and produces effects which retard his progress. But to advance further on this point, however interesting it may be, would only tend to distract the attention of the reader from the subject with which we are mainly concerned.

If the remarks hitherto made are of any value, they undoubtedly tend to prove that all inferior races have a tendency, in the first instance, to adopt the vices rather than the virtues of the more civilised races they may come in contact with. Assuming then, as I think we have every right to do, that this statement is universally true, it is evident that the social separation maintained by caste has been of incalculable advantage. On the other hand, however, a number of disadvantages have been indicated by various writers; but only one of these seems to me at all worthy of serious attention. It has been asserted that this segregation has impeded advancement, that it has prevented the Indians learning as much from us as they otherwise might, and that it has impeded the mainspring of all advancement—education. Here, I apprehend, the argument against caste, as far as rural populations are concerned, utterly fails, and, in a province contiguous to my own, a most signal instance to the contrary can be pointed to. Few people have more proudly segregated themselves than the Coorgs; nowhere is the chastity of women more jealously guarded; and yet they were the first people in India who desired and petitioned for female education. And

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of India entitle him to be placed in the very highest rank of those who spend much time and labour to produce effects which they can never live to see the fruits of. These remarks of his which I am now about to quote were made at the close of a paper on Caste which I read at a meeting of the East India Association, and are quoted from the report published in the journal of the Association. After fully granting that, in the condition of society existing at the time the system of caste was established, it may have done a great deal of good, Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji proceeded to remark on the way the present system of caste interferes with progress among the higher classes, and then gave several instances to illustrate his observation.

"The great struggle," he said, "which is now going on in Bombay about the widow-marriage question is an apt illustration of this; and, also, the fear of excommunication prevents a large body of natives from coming to this country, and profiting by their visit. It is often said, 'Educated Hindoos ought not to care for this excommunication;' but those who say that, little think what excommunication means. A man who is excommunicated may not care for it for his own sake, but he has his family to consider. What is to be done with daughters? They cannot marry if their father is excommunicated, and the result is, therefore, most serious to them. I knew of one instance of a native gentleman who, being excommunicated from his caste for having visited England, had, on the death of his child, been put to the very painful necessity of having the body carried by his servant, without any one accompanying him."

It would be impossible, I think, to furnish two better instances of the evils of caste to people desirous of

shaking off in any way the habits of their forefathers; and a more melancholy picture than that of this unfortunate man setting out with his dead child without a single friend to accompany him it would indeed be difficult to find. Many other illustrations might, of course, be given; but enough has been said already, and we may safely consider it as a settled question that, as far as the people of the towns are concerned, the sooner caste is abolished the better.

In retracing the ground we have gone over, I may remind the reader that we have considered the effects of caste, as regards the country population, in two very important particulars: first of all, as to the morality of the sexes, which is controlled to such a large extent by caste law; and, secondly, we have looked at the effects of caste as controlling the use of alcohol, and consequently limiting the crimes and evils that can in most countries be traced to drinking. On both of these points we have compared an Indian county with any county in Great Britain, and saw reason to think that morality, as regards the points under consideration, is better in Munzerabad than in any British county. And, by facts which may be brought from many quarters of the globe, we have seen that it is a universal law that inferior races have a tendency to adopt the vices rather than the virtues of superior races, and that, therefore, caste laws which enjoin social separation are of the highest value. We have seen, too, the value of caste in keeping up feelings of superiority and self-respect. We have also seen that these caste laws can exist without retarding the progress of the people, or their desire for education. And, finally, taking all these points into consideration, we concluded that there were no

drawbacks, and many striking advantages, connected with caste as far as the country populations are concerned.

In the next place, we looked at the circumstances of the people of the towns, inquired as to how caste has affected them for good or evil, and came to the conclusion that not only does no good arise from caste, but that it is plainly and unmistakably an unmitigated evil.

Keeping these conclusions firmly in mind, let us now advance to the consideration of a third question, which naturally arises out of those facts which I assume to have been established.

That question is—How far has caste acted beneficially, or the reverse, in helping to retard our interpretation of Christianity? Pursuing the same order as before, let us ask, in the first place, whether caste has, as regards the country populations, acted beneficially in this as well as in the other points we have looked at. But, before attempting to answer this question, it may be as well to offer a few general remarks which tend to show that, independently of any question of caste, it is hopeless to expect that any ignorant and generally unenlightened race can possibly derive any benefit from adopting the formulas and dogmas of a pure faith.

To illustrate this old and well-established truth, let us point to four of the many instances which may be adduced as decisively confirming it—the history of Christianity in Europe, of Islam amongst the Indian Mahomedans, and the history of Christianity in Abyssinia and India. As to the first, to use the words of Buckle, "after the new religion had received the homage of the best part of Europe, it was found that nothing had really been effected." Superstition was merely turned from one channel into another. The adoration

of idols was succeeded by the adoration of saints, and for centuries after Christianity had become the established religion it entirely failed to produce its natural fruits, because ignorance imperatively demanded superstition in some shape or other. To some it may seem, at first sight, a curious circumstance that the same remarks may be applied to the history of Mahomedanism in India. The idols were broken, and the one God declared. But how long was it before the people, like the Israelites of old, fell away from the grand central doctrine of Mahomedanism—the unity of God? How long was it before the adoration of idols was followed by the adoration of saints? The exact coincidence, however, is no more striking than that given causes produce fixed results with an Eastern as well as with a Western people. When we turn, thirdly, to Abyssinia, what do we find? How have the dogmas of Christianity fared there? The Abyssinians did not rise to the level of the dogmas and principles of Christianity —that we all know. They simply reduced it to their own level. Look, lastly, at our native Christians in India. I believe it is quite certain that, in the general opinion of Englishmen, they are, to say the least, very far from being the best class in India; in fact, I do not think it too much to say that most Europeans hold them to be about the worst class of people in India. I confess that I do not share this opinion altogether. The fact probably is that, in consequence of their extreme ignorance and generally debased state, they are, in the rural districts, neither better nor worse than the classes from which they are principally drawn. In our cantonments, however, and especially in those where European soldiery abounds, there is every probability of their being

worse than the classes from which they have sprung; and I have little doubt that the low estimation in which the native Christians are held is owing to the fact that our countrymen have generally come in contact with the specimens that have been nurtured amidst the scum of our Indian towns. Were we to believe the assertions of our English missionaries, very different conclusions would, of course, be arrived at; but unless they can show that the lowest and most ignorant classes of natives, who from their habits, and from having nothing to lose, are under great temptations, form an exception to all specimens of humanity in other quarters of the globe, I am afraid there can be little reason to doubt that the opinions I have expressed are fairly correct. I doubt very much, in fact, from my intimate knowledge of the lower classes of natives,—and it is from these, as I said before, that our converts are mainly derived,—whether they are capable of comprehending our religion at all. Of one thing I think we may be quite certain, and that is, that the moment the missionary's back is turned, these people return to their devils in the event of any danger or sickness arising. This might be arrived at deductively with perfect accuracy, and arguing solely from our knowledge of humanity under certain conditions; but I may mention that in Ceylon instances of people reverting to their devil-worship are common amongst the native Christians, and instances might, no doubt, be soon collected in India, if any one thought it worth the trouble. While alluding to missionary assertions, I may mention that the credulity of these gentlemen seems only to be equalled by the credulity of the British public. If they would only extend their belief in the goodness of natives a little further, one might be

tempted to sympathise with this amiable weakness. But the peculiar part of their statements lies in the fact that their converts have got all the virtue and morality in India, while the respectable classes of the community seem, by their account, to be very badly off in these respects. The most curious instance, however, of missionary credulity that I have met with is to be found in the evidence of Mr. Underhill, given before the Committee on Colonization (India) in 1859. And it certainly is a surprising result of conversion to find that the wives of the converts become not only more beautiful, but also more fertile, than their heathen sisters. Two heathen natives had been heard to testify to these facts, and it is wonderful to observe the complacent air of satisfaction with which these statements are accepted by the witness, who added that "this difference evidently arises from the more chaste and regular modes of life in which they fall."*

I have said that the native Christians are probably neither better nor worse than the lower classes from which they are drawn, and the painfully truthful remarks given in the note below† seem to show that, whatever

* It may be observed here that there are few who know so little as to the sexual morality of the people around them as clergymen. It does not become them, of course, to enter into the gossip of the village, nor does any one care to broach such subjects in the first instance; and I may mention here that a relative of my own, a clergyman in a country parish, told me that if anything went wrong in these respects he was the very last person in the world to hear one word about it.

† The Abbé Dubois makes the following remarks:—"During the long period I lived in India, in the capacity of a missionary, I have made, with the assistance of a native missionary, in all between two and three hundred converts of both sexes. Of this number two-thirds were Pariahs or beggars, and the rest were composed of Sudras, vagrants, and outcasts of several tribes, who, being without resources, turned Christians in order to form new connections, chiefly for the purpose of marriage, or with some other interested motive. Among them are also to be found some who believed themselves to be possessed with the devil, and who turned Christians after having been assured that on receiving baptism the unclean spirits would leave them and never return; and I will declare it with

may be the case now (and I believe that the low-class converts are somewhat better than they were then), the converts to Christianity must have been originally a very indifferent set of people. Christianity, however, if it did not make these classes much better, at any rate made them no worse. When we turn, however, to the middle-class farmers, it is evident that to have converted them, unless that conversion had been preceded by enlightenment, and a more advanced civilisation than they had hitherto enjoyed, would have inflicted on them an incalculable injury, by depriving them of restraints which, as we have seen, are in some particulars of immense importance. To become a Christian, the first thing required of a man is that he should give up caste, and deliver himself to the sole guidance of his conscience; that he should give up a powerful and effective moral restraint; that he should abandon a position which carries with it feelings of self-respect and superiority, and resign himself to the degrading reflection that he may eat from the same platter and drink from the same vessel as the filthiest Pariah; and that this would be degrading there can be little doubt. Were he an educated and enlightened man, he would be sustained by feelings which would raise him above the influence of such considerations. But, in the absence of enlightenment, sad would be his fate, and melancholy the deterioration that would inevitably ensue. The way in which that de-

shame and confusion that I do not remember any one who may be said to have embraced Christianity from conviction and from quite disinterested motives. Among these new-comers many apostatised and relapsed into paganism, finding that the Christian religion did not afford them the temporal advantages they had looked for in embracing it; and I am very ashamed that the resolution I have taken to tell the whole truth on this subject forces me to make the humiliating avowal that those who continued Christians are the very worst among my flock." —Dr. Allen's "India," p. 522.

terioration would take place, the way in which he would become careless of what he did, or of what became of him, has been sufficiently indicated in the previous pages of this chapter; and to give in detail the principal reasons against a change of faith which involved the abolition of caste, would only be to repeat what I have already said as to the effect of the institution in controlling the morality of the sexes and the use of alcohol. Not only, then, I repeat, would a change of dogma be as unimproving and superficial as changes of that sort always are with unenlightened people, but a number of positive evils would follow from the necessary abandonment of the restrictions of caste; and we may therefore conclude that, as regards the whole population, the effect of caste in helping to prevent the adoption of our interpretation of Christianity is of incalculable advantage.

When we turn to the town populations the case is widely different. We have seen that for them the practical advantages of caste can hardly be said to exist at all, and therefore a change of religion which involved its abolition would, as regards any part of the society, at least produce no evil. Here, at least, we are on safe ground. But this is not all. We see that with the better classes education and enlightenment have borne their natural fruit, and demanded a pure faith, which has already sprung up in the shape of Deism. Enlightenment, then, will produce a pure faith, which will in time react on society, and push it forward with accelerated speed. Now, it cannot be denied that caste laws do retard the free and unfettered adoption of a pure faith; and if we assume that a pure faith will in turn become a cause, or even an accelerator, of progress, then it is certain that, as regards the peoples of the towns, caste, as

retarding the adoption of the most advanced principles of religion, is an undoubted calamity.

We have now looked at the bearings of caste on three very important points—its moral bearing amongst the Indians themselves, its effects in maintaining a social separation between the white and dark races, and its effects in retarding the adoption of a religion which involves the entire abolition of caste laws. In the first place, we looked at the effects of caste laws on the rural populations, and came to the conclusion that on all these points caste has operated, and continues to operate, advantageously. In the second place, we looked at its effects on the peoples of the towns, and came to the conclusion that caste confers on them no advantages, while it is always productive of serious evil.

Let us now glance for one moment at the causes of the general outcry which you everywhere hear against caste institutions, and at the same time suggest the line of conduct that the people of the towns ought to adopt with reference to this question.

And here I need not occupy much space in indicating the causes of that abuse of caste which has always been so popular with my countrymen. In fact, if we admit the truth of the facts and arguments hitherto adduced, these causes are so apparent that the reader must have already anticipated the solution I have to give. Caste, as we have seen, is a serious evil to the peoples of the towns. Now, it is amongst towns and cantonments that our principal experiences of this institution have been acquired, and the educated natives of the Indian capitals, feeling all the evils and experiencing none of the advantages of caste, are naturally loud in its condemnation. Hence the cry arising from all Europeans and a

trifling section of the Indians, that caste should be abolished from one end of India to the other. But how is it that no response comes from these country populations amongst whom I have lived? How is it that these shrewd-headed people* are so insensible to the evils of caste, and that you never hear one word about it? The answer is extremely simple. They have never felt these evils, because for them they do not exist. If they felt the pressure of caste laws as do the people of the towns, the outcry would be universal, and the institution speedily done away with. Need I add that, when the people of the country are as advanced as the people of the towns, that then, and not till then, will the pressure, which is now confined to the latter, be universally felt; that then, and not till then, will this institution, being no longer suited to the requirements of the age, be universally discarded?

Let us now say a few words as to the line of conduct that should be adopted, as regards caste, by those who are desirous of freeing themselves from the restrictions of that institution.

In the first place, the opponents of caste should not weaken their case by talking nonsense; and, in the second place, they should remember, above all things, that, to use a common saying, "if you want a pig to go to Dublin, the best thing you can do is to start him off

* I may mention here that Sir Bartle Frere, in his paper on "Indian Public Works," said, with reference to opening up districts hitherto unpierced by roads, "And here let me observe, in passing, without any disparagement of my own countrymen, that I have generally found the agricultural and commercial classes of India quite as intelligent on points of this kind as the agricultural and commercial classes of our own old-fashioned country." But I have always found that the people who have had the best opportunities of judging have formed very favourable opinions as to the intelligence of the agricultural classes, who are generally painted as being entirely indifferent, and even hostile, to the best schemes undertaken for their benefit.

on the way to Cork." I shall now enlarge a little on both of these recommendations.

To illustrate my first suggestion—and to this suggestion I shall again have occasion to allude further on in this chapter—a few sentences may be devoted to glancing at some of those remarkable conclusions which sound so well in the observations one often hears when anything is said about India. The tendency of caste, you will hear it gravely urged, is to elevate the upper classes on the highest possible pinnacle, and keep the Pariah grovelling in the dust. "What," continues the speaker, "keeps the Brahmin at the top and the Pariah at the bottom?" Why, let me ask in turn, is a cow's tail long, and a fox's tail bushy? Is it in this nineteenth century that we are to try and din into people's ears that the upper classes in India were at the top of the social scale, and the Pariah at the bottom, centuries before caste, in its present shape, ever existed, and that the relative position of the two races would continue with little change if caste was to be abolished to-morrow morning? "What," gravely asks another, "has prevented the peoples of India uniting into one grand nation, and destroyed all hopes of political fusion?" Nor, to many, would the absurdity of the question be apparent till you asked them what has prevented all Europe becoming one nation; or, to take things on a smaller scale, till you asked what prevented the Highland clans forming themselves into a nation. In short, whenever a man is in a difficulty, and at a loss to account for anything connected with the state of the people of India, he takes refuge in caste, combined, perhaps, with what is called native prejudice, though what that last means I do not pretend to explain. Now, it is not improbable that some

of my readers may have heard of Holloway's pills, and we know, in fact, that thousands believe that medicine to be an efficacious remedy for every constitutional ailment. Only swallow Holloway, and you are a cured man. Well, the abolition of caste, with an incredible number of people, is, in like manner, confidently pronounced to be a universal remedy for all the political and social complaints of India. Remove that, and you will at one stroke secure social liberty, national unity, the removal of idolatry, and, some even are rash enough to affirm, the universal adoption of Christianity. Such, then, are a few examples of the nonsense you will hear commonly talked about caste, and I think I need not waste time in pointing out that the opponents of caste must take very different ground if they wish to obtain a hearing from the peoples of India.

In the second point to which I have called the attention of the reader I alluded to the general law of opposition, and used a common saying which exactly illustrates the probable result of violent and ill-judged attacks on caste. In fact, so apparent is this, that the reader must have already anticipated the line that, in my opinion, the opponents of caste should follow. What the opponents of caste should preach is, not the abolition of that institution, but toleration for the educated and advanced members of the community who, finding caste an impediment and a burden, wish to discard it. They should admit that this institution has been, and is at the present moment, of value amongst the rural populations, but they should, at the same time, point out that times are changing, and that the peoples of the towns ask for some toleration, not because caste is necessarily a universal evil in itself, but because it is, as far as they are

concerned, highly inconvenient. This is the way—and, if this plan does not answer, I feel sure no other will—that the evils of caste are to be mitigated, and I urge these views accordingly on the serious attention of all enlightened Indians.

The reader will have observed that, when pointing out the advantages of caste in repelling our interpretation of Christianity, I have assumed that the adoption of Christianity necessarily involves the entire abolition of all those social distinctions that make up what we call caste. Such have been the terms on which Christianity has been offered to the peoples of India by our English missionaries; and I, for one, do most sincerely rejoice that their hide-bound interpretation of the Protestant faith has been as promptly as it has been decidedly rejected. But why should caste—which, as I have shown, can be proved to have produced such favourable results as regards drinking, and as regards the morality of the sexes—why should this institution, which in these respects can be proved to have produced better results than Christianity has ever done in these islands—why should this be swept away because you wish to introduce the religion of Christ? It has been alleged to be entirely incompatible with Christianity; and were this so, there would, of course, be no more to be said. But this I wholly deny. It is, of course, incompatible in some respects with exalted conceptions of the most advanced Christianity; but there is no reason why Christianity should not be allowed to exist alongside of abnormal social growths, and why, in short, Christianity should not be stretched to tolerate caste, in the same way that it was allowed by the apostles to exist alongside of evils with which the institution of caste cannot,

for iniquity or for general ill effects, be for one moment compared. Christianity was not held by the apostles to be an impossibility because the professors of that faith bought and sold slaves; it was not held so by their descendants for hundreds of years; and will those interpreters of Christianity whom we have sent to India venture to assert that the Americans had no right to the name of Christians until the close of the late war? Slavery was driven out at length, or at least in a great measure driven out, by Christianity; but Christianity, remember, had first of all to be introduced; and taking into consideration the Acts of the Apostles, the way in which they yielded to the customs and prejudices of their converts, and the resolution they came to "not to trouble those of the Gentiles who were turning to God," on what grounds do our missionaries rest their claim to debar from the advantages of Christianity those people who, wishing to retain their place in society, desire to become Christians? This is not the first time that these questions have been asked. They were asked at great length by Mr. Irving in his "Theory and Practice of Caste." Hitherto they have been asked in vain; and owing to the indifference of people in this country, and to the slavish submission of the laity to the opinion of the missionaries, a system of attempting to propagate Christianity has been allowed to exist which has been of incalculable mischief. But I think we may even go further than this. I think it may be asserted that the line taken up, as regards caste, by our missionaries has acted more prejudicially to the interests of Christianity than if we had deliberately despatched emissaries to India with the view of preventing the people from adopting the religion of Christ. These may seem harsh,

and I have no doubt they will prove to be unwelcome, expressions of opinion. They will hurt, and I am afraid will shock, the feelings of many a good and worthy man. I regret that this should be so, but I cannot help it. In any case good must arise. If I am right, as I firmly believe myself to be, the cause of enlightenment and Christianity will be advanced; and if I am wrong, and it can be proved that the missionaries are right, they will have as great, and it may even be a greater claim to public support than they ever had before. But it must clearly be understood that, as an individual desirous of propagating truth, I have a right to demand an answer. If that answer is satisfactory, well and good. If it is not satisfactory, or if no answer be supplied at all, I shall then request the public here to consider whether it would not be better to withhold all their subscriptions from our English, or at least transfer them to such missions as will consent to attempt to propagate Christianity on the widest possible base.

In considering this important subject I shall, in the first place, glance at Bishop Heber's Letter on Caste; Bishop Wilson's Circular; the Report of the Madras Commissioners; and the statement of the Tanjore German Missionaries. This may seem a formidable list of documents to commence with, but it is my intention to make only the most cursory allusion to each, as to consider these papers at any length would occupy far too much space. Having thus stated the difference of opinions, as regards caste, between the Germans and the Protestant missionaries, I shall then proceed to inquire whether caste can or can not be traced to an idolatrous source; whether it was in any way necessarily wound up with religion; and whether, further, it is at all necessary

that, supposing it to have been at any time wound up with religion, there should therefore be at the present day any necessary connection between the religions of the peoples and their caste customs.

In Bishop Heber's Letter of March 21st, 1826, he says that, "with regard to the distinctions of caste as yet maintained by professing Christians, it appears that they are manifested—(*a*) in desiring separate seats at church; (*b*) in going up at different times to receive the Holy Communion: (*c*) in insisting on their children having different sides of the school; (*d*) in refusing to eat, drink, or associate with those of a different caste."

On the first of these points the bishop observes, with great justice, that points of precedence have constantly been granted in Christian churches to people of noble birth and of great fortune, and that in the United States of America these distinctions were always maintained between the whites and the negroes. He also points out that a Christian gentleman conforms to those rules because, if he neglected them, he would lose influence with his own degree in society, and that a native of the better classes acts exactly on the same principle. And on this point he concludes that distinctions of caste in church may still be allowed, provided that due care is taken to teach the natives that in the sight of God they are all equal.

As regards the second point the good bishop says nothing, because, I surmise, he concluded the going up at different times to receive the sacrament was included in his remarks as regard precedence in church.

As regards the schools, and amongst the children, he observes that caste must, as regards taking places, &c.,

be disregarded, but, he adds, even here caution should be observed to disgust no man needlessly.

With regard to the fourth point, he was decidedly of opinion that, as regards private meals and social intercourse, we had no right to interfere whatever.

After alluding to the objections raised by some zealous missionaries to the processions in marriages and other matters, he intimates pretty plainly that he has some fears that recent missionaries have been more scrupulous in these matters than need requires. He then concludes by saying that "God forbid we should wink at sin; but God forbid, also, that we should make the narrow gate of life narrower than Christ has made it, or deal less favourably with the prejudices of this people than St. Paul and the primitive church dealt with the almost similar prejudices of the Jewish converts."

The bishop then framed a set of questions as regards caste observances, to which he required particular answers; but, in consequence of his untimely death, and of the short tenure of office held by his successors, Bishops James and Turner, no further official action was taken till the middle of 1833, when Bishop Wilson's Circular* dealt the most fatal blow to Christianity that

* In this Circular of Bishop Wilson's it is surprising to observe the contradictions that exist. At one part of the Circular we are told that the apostle's language is conclusive: and "Seeing ye have put off the old man with deeds, and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him, where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free, but Christ is all, and in all," is quoted as evidence of the Divine wishes. "So overwhelming," continues the bishop, "is the flood by which all petty distinctions of nation, caste, privilege, rank, climate, position in civilization are effaced, and one grand distinction substituted." And yet, at another part of the Circular, we are told that the distinctions in civil society are acknowledged by the Gospel, when they are "the natural result of difference of talents, industry, piety, station, and success." Another decision of the apostle is quoted in the same Circular, and it is this—"There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female, for we are all one in Christ Jesus;" and so, of course, we are all equal in his sight. And yet this is quoted as being a decision in favour of

it has ever received in India. For this Circular imperatively declared that the distinction of castes, as regards all the relations of life, must be abandoned, "decidedly, immediately, and finally." And in order that this mandate might be intensely galling to the upper-class vegetarian Christian, it was especially ordered that "differences of food and dress" were to be included in those overt acts which were to mark out for condemnation the Christian who still clung to the habits of his fathers in these innocent, and, as regards food, healthful restrictions. To cling to these differences of food and dress, and to abstain from alcohol, was to cling to caste; and it was especially ordered that the children of native Christians should not be admitted to the Holy Communion without a full renunciation of all those social differences which might distinguish them from other members of the society in which they lived. This was quite sufficient. "The Circular was read in the churches of

doing away with the civil institutions of caste, which are undoubtedly the marks of that "station" which the bishop tells us is acknowledged by the Gospel, and in no way different from the station that a member of the House of Lords inherits from his predecessors. And here, though I do not think that it is advisable to cling to isolated texts as evidence of the general conduct of the apostles regarding the prejudices of their converts, I may mention that Peter, in his first Epistle, says, "Submit yourself to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake." And if we take Dean Alford's interpretation of this, and consider it as equivalent to a command, extending to every human institution (and I can see no reason why we should not), it is plain that our missionaries in India, if they wish to follow the example of the apostles, should yield to the prejudices of caste as long as they do not involve idolatrous rites. But it is in the general action of the apostles, as illustrated in Acts xv. 19, that the safest guide may, I apprehend, be found; and when, with reference to difficulties as regarding the customs of their converts, St. James said (Dean Alford's edition), "Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them which from the Gentiles are turned to God; but that we write to them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood;"—and again: "For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than" [these] "necessary things; that ye abstain from meats offered unto idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication; from which, if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well;"—when the apostle said thus, I think we ought to feel little doubt as to the course we ought to pursue regarding the social customs of the peoples of India.

Tanjore. It was received by the native Christians with great displeasure, and they showed their views by seceding in a body."

Turning now to the Report of the Madras Commissioners, which was written in 1845, we shall at once see the cause and root of this violent attack on social usages. For the commissioners commence their Report by stating that the institution of caste and the divisions of society were things of priestly invention, and that, in fact, the whole of Hindoo society, as we at present see it, originated in, and is maintained by, Hindoo idolatry. And they further allege that the tyranny of this institution is such as to be perfectly unaccountable on any other supposition. How any body of priests had the power to issue and enforce mandates regarding the extraordinary diversities as to food and dress that we see prevailing throughout India, where the council sat that issued these decrees, and where the members of this council came from, they give no account. They do not seem to have even thought of such questions, and, for evidence of these astounding assertions, they refer us to what they call "the laws of Manu,"* and to Halhed's "Gentoo

* "The name, 'Laws of Manu,' somewhat resembles a pious fraud, for the 'laws' are merely the laws or customs of a school or association of Hindoos, called the Mânavas, who lived in the country rendered holy by the divine river Saraswati. In this district the Hindoos first felt themselves a settled people, and in this neighbourhood they established colleges and hermitages, or âsramas, from some of which we may suppose Brâhmanas, Upanishads, and other religious compositions may have issued; and under such influences we may imagine the Code of Manu to have been composed.

"The Mânavas were undoubtedly an active, energetic people, who governed themselves, paid taxes to the king, established internal and external trade, and drew up an extensive system of laws and customs, to which they appended real and imaginary awards. This system appears to have worked so well, that it was adopted by other communities, and then the organisers announced it as laws given to them by their divine progenitor, the great Mana. They added passages, moreover, which assert the divine claims of Brâhmans and the inferiority of the rest of mankind. Such assertions are little more than rhetorical flourishes, for Brâhmans never were either so omnipotent or so unamiable as the Code would represent them; nor were the Sûdras ever so degraded. In Sanskrit plays and

Hindoo Code." Caste and idolatry, then, according to them, are not only inextricably wound up together, but caste itself was caused by, and is a part of, idolatry; and we are, therefore, plainly told that it is impossible that a man should abandon the one without abandoning the other, and that, in other words, the two institutions must stand or fall together. Leaving this part of these assertions to be commented on further on, I now pass on to the statement and arguments of the Tanjore German missionaries.

Shortly after Bishop Heber's Letter which I have referred to at the commencement of these remarks, he drew up a number of questions regarding caste practices amongst native Christians, to which he required special answers. These Articles of Inquiry, as they are termed, were sent to the Tanjore missionaries, and by them a statement in reply was furnished. They were asked for their opinion in 1828, and though no date is affixed to these statements, I conclude that they probably replied towards the close of that year.

They commence by observing that the distinctions of caste had been observed since the establishment of the mission by the Rev. Mr. Schwartz, soon after the year 1762, and that he himself had been guided, partly by his own discretion, and partly by the example of the clergy of the Tranquebar mission, which, in the year 1705, was started by those good and amiable men of whom I have given some account in another part of this work. These successors of Schwartz, then, observed that they had persistently imitated the conduct of that able

poems, weak and indigent Brâhmans are by no means unfrequent; and, on the other hand, we meet with Sûdras who had political rights, and even in the Code find the pedigrees of great men traced up to Sûdra ancestors."—Mrs. Manning's "Ancient and Mediæval India," vol. i. p. 276.

and good man; but that, while they took care to imitate his caution and forbearance, they seized every opportunity of softening the mutual prejudices arising from distinctions of caste; and they also observe that, in consequence, those distinctions of caste have gradually lost a great deal of their importance.

Alluding, in the next place, to the assertion that castes had been invented and entirely originated by the Brahmins, the authors of the statement observe that, in the opinion of the most intelligent natives who were not of the Brahminical order, the social distinctions which constitute caste existed long before the Brahmins came into the country at all; and they assert, further, that though the Brahmin priests blended those social distinctions with their idolatry, and framed a convenient legend to account for their divine institution, the whole thing was a mere fiction, which had been invented with the view of adding to the power of an ambitious priesthood. But the missionaries of Tanjore asserted, further, that even if the legend of caste was a true one, and that caste had been a part of idolatry, still those who abandoned the worshipping of idols and superstitious rites were not, therefore, to be required to abandon such practices as had nothing of idolatry about them at all, and they distinctly declared that no rites of an idolatrous or even mixed nature were tolerated amongst their converts.

The missionaries then pointed out that their high-caste converts simply retained these privileges and social customs because they would lose the respect of their neighbours if they abandoned those marks of station which they had inherited, and which they looked upon entirely as a civil prerogative. It was also pointed out that high-caste priests gained ready access to the houses

of the better classes, and had, therefore, better chances of spreading Christianity than Pariah priests, whom no good-caste native would allow to cross the threshold of his house.

At church those of the upper classes sat on one side, and those of the lower on the other, and the higher and lower castes went up at different times to the communion-table.

In the schools no difficulty was experienced, and high and low caste children sat quite indiscriminately.

As regards social intercourse, they observe that none of their converts have any objection to partake of food prepared by another caste, as long as that caste is of superior rank to them, but that no one would touch food prepared by a man of lower caste than himself. The distinction of caste was also preserved as regards marriages, though these, of course, were always solemnised in the church.

Finally, these good and sensible men regret the tendencies of caste, but seem to consider that more good was to be done by letting it alone, and, in short, letting it die a natural death, than by forcibly opposing the prejudices of the people. And they very justly observe, that to oblige a man of high caste to eat with the lowest is doing force to common delicacy and to natural feelings of sense, and may be sometimes of serious consequence to bodily health.

I may here mention that about twelve years ago, Dr. Graul, the head of the Leipsic Missionary Society,* visited India, remained there three years at the various missionary stations, and was firmly convinced that to interfere with the social customs of the native Christians

* *Vide* Appendix C.

would be at once unjust and impolitic. As regards the exact action of the Roman Catholics at present, I have no information to lay before the reader, but I know that they always had the wisdom to interfere as little as possible with the prejudices of the people, as long as they did not involve idolatrous rites.

Having thus laid before the reader an outline of the views of the supporters and opponents of caste, I shall now offer the conclusions I have arrived at, partly from my own observations and partly from the writings of others. I shall

1. Inquire into the origin of caste.

2. I shall inquire into the sanitary uses of caste, more especially as it concerns the approaching the communion-table promiscuously, as to the sitting together in church or other places, and as to its effect as regards general social intercourse.

3. I shall inquire whether there are not some compensating advantages, as regards caste institutions, which tend in a great measure to neutralise the prejudicial effects that arise from people's sympathies and feelings being confined to the members of their own caste, instead of being evenly distributed over the human race, considered as a whole.

And, first of all, as to the origin of caste—a point which seems to have been thought of no little importance by our caste-condemning missionaries. I confess that I, for my part, do not attach much importance to this question of the origin of caste, and think it of far more importance to ascertain its present bearing and effect. But, as many have raised the question, and asserted that caste had an idolatrous origin, and was the invention of an idolatrous priesthood, it may be worth while to

gather together such facts as we can lay our hands on regarding this somewhat obscure subject. And it seems to me that the first thing we have to do is to clear away the rubbish which has been piled upon it in common with most Indian institutions—to ask what is evidence, and what is not. Our missionaries have asserted that caste can be clearly traced to an idolatrous origin, and that the institution is entirely unaccountable on any other supposition, and they pointed to the Code of Manu in proof of that assertion. But, on referring to Mrs. Manning's valuable work on "Ancient and Mediæval India," we can find no evidence that caste originated in any special way whatever. And we are told, on the authority of Mr. Muir, that the sacred books of the Hindoos contain no uniform or consistent account of the origin of caste, and that the freest scope is given by the individual writers to fanciful and arbitrary conjecture. The story that the castes issued from the mouth, arms, thighs, and feet of Brahma was simply an allegory, which, in the course of time, hardened into a literal statement of fact. The Brahmins, of course, came out of the mouth of Brahma; and, considering that they were the authors and compilers of all the principal books relating to castes and customs, it would have been extremely odd if they had not exalted their own order, and indulged in a tone of Oriental exaggeration which was eminently calculated to deceive, not, perhaps, their successors, but the Englishmen who went to India. But the most curious thing is, that it never seems to have occurred to our missionaries to suspect that what they took as evidence of facts, and of a state of things really existing, was, in reality, only evidence of what an order or set of people could write, with the view of exalting

themselves and depressing the rest of the society amongst which they lived. The Brahmins chose to assert that the castes were of divine origin. They wrote that down and handed it on. We came to India, and, finding these statements ready to hand, have simply swallowed them down, and added them to the number of illusions existing as regards India. But the facts really are, that castes and orders of men sprang up, we don't know exactly how. Brahmin writers described the castes, or at least part of them, and, in the course of time, the writings were said to have caused the castes, instead of the castes having caused the writings.

But whatever may be the facts as regards caste, we know that caste can exist without idolatry, and idolatry without caste; and that though the Brahmins, with their usual desire to incorporate everything in life with religion, gathered caste into their garners, and endeavoured to increase and extend it, still there is fair evidence for asserting that these two institutions have no necessary connection, and that, as it was perfectly possible to wind them up together, so it is perfectly possible to unwind them and produce again an entire separation. In a word, it is perfectly possible for a man to retain caste, not as believing it to be part of his native idolatrous religion, but as believing it to be (what it really was till the Brahmins seized hold of it and attached it to their faith) a civil institution which had sprung up in remote times, and had been inherited by him, just as rank and station are inherited in this country.* And

* As an instance that a man can abandon all religious rites whatever, and retain his caste unimpaired and unaltered, I may mention that my native clerk told me that he had done nothing in the way of religion at all for years; but that, of course, made no difference to him in the eyes of his neighbours, who didn't care what he did, as long as he did not depart from the social customs of

that caste can exist without religion, and alongside of a religion as opposite to Brahminism as Christianity is, we have the most indisputable evidence supplied by the late Sir Emerson Tennent, in his "History of Christianity in Ceylon."

"Caste," he wrote, "as it exists at the present day amongst the Buddhists of Ceylon, is purely a social distinction, and entirely disconnected with any sanction or pretensions derivable from their system of religion. Nor is evidence wanting that, even at a comparatively modern period, such was equally its aspect amongst the natives throughout the continent of India, by whom caste was held not as a sacred, but as a secular discrimination of ranks. The earliest notice of India by the Greek historians and geographers enumerates the division of the people into Brahmins, Kistrayas, Vaisyas, and Sudras; but this was a classification which applied equally to the followers of Buddha" (who preached that, in the sight of God, all men were equal) "and of Brahma, nor were the members of either section held ineligible for the offices of the priesthood." And, in the note below, the reader will find additional evidence which will show him that caste in Ceylon, just as it originally was in India, can and does exist merely as a division of ranks, and that it need not at all be necessarily connected with any idolatrous rites or worship.*

his caste. I once said to a native shopkeeper in Bangalore, "What religion are you of?" "Oh!" he answered with a smile, "no religion at all, sir." But I need not trouble the reader with further evidence to show that a man may drop his religion altogether without dropping his caste, and that therefore religion and caste have no necessary connection with one another whatever.

* "Caste, though distinctly denounced by their sacred books, and ostensibly disavowed by the Singhalese themselves, still exists in their veneration for rank, whether hereditary or adventitious. Thus every district and every village has its little leader, a pre-eminence accorded to birth rather than property; and, by a descending scale, certain members of the community, in right of relationship or connection, assume an undefined superiority, and are tacitly admitted to the

Having thus shown how caste did not originate, it may, perhaps, not be altogether superfluous if I hazard a few remarks as to the way in which it did probably originate.

The common idea of caste is, that it is simply a combination of troublesome and fanciful restrictions, imposed upon the various peoples of India by those of the upper classes who desired to keep themselves above the jostling of the crowd. But this institution (if that be a correct term for it) arose naturally and regularly out of the circumstances of the times, and, where these circumstances no longer exist, it will as naturally disappear; and that the last must happen we have seen from the fact that altered circumstances have already caused the commencement of its removal amongst the people of the towns. But the general circumstances which gave birth to caste require a few words of explanation, and the following solution seems not an unnatural one.

We know as a certain fact that peoples to whom we have given the names of Dravidians and Aryans entered

exercise of what is technically called an 'influence.' In the hamlets so universal is this feeling amongst the natives, so habitual the impulse to classify themselves and to look up to some one as their superior in the scale of society, that the custom descends through every gradation of life and its occupations, and in some of the villages the missionaries found it necessary to appoint two schoolmasters, even where there was less than occupation for one—'influence,' as well as ability to teach, being an essential qualification; and if the individual did not possess the former, it was most indispensable to associate with him some other who did.[1] Again, if a village could not furnish a master competent to teach, it was in vain to procure one from a distance; his 'influence' did not extend to that locality, and no pupils could be got to attend. Nor was caste itself without the open avowal of its force, the children of a Vellala or high-caste family being on no account permitted to enter the school-house of a lower-caste master. These are obstacles which prevail in all their original force even at the present day; and in the purely Singhalese districts, such as Matura, the prestige of caste is so despotic, that no amount of qualification in all other particulars can overcome the repugnance to intercourse with those who are deficient in the paramount requisite of rank."—Sir J. E. Tennent's "Christianity in Ceylon," p. 286.

[1] MS. account of Baptist Mission.

India from the north and north-west; that they increased and multiplied, overspread the whole of India, and reduced the aborigines to serfdom. We also know that these tribes from the north, who were, comparatively speaking, fair, looked upon the black, ugly, carrion-eating aborigines with singular disgust. Hence, naturally, must have arisen the opinions as regards Pariahs which all the superior castes hold to this day. Even to have food touched by people of such abominable habits must have been repulsive, and therefore the separation into men of caste and men of no caste, or, in other words, into browns and blacks (for the word for caste means colour), followed as a matter of course. Caste, then, seems naturally to have arisen from the idea that to associate in any way with people of bad habits and grovelling ideas is an intolerable degradation. The superior races, therefore, must have considered it a matter of importance to retreat as far as possible from the habits of the aborigines; and when we take into consideration the influence of religion, the natural ambition of the priestly classes, the splitting up into sects, and the fondness of the Hindoo mind for subtle distinctions, the rest easily follows. But, though numerous castes arose amongst the invaders, the main line of demarcation is still the original one of race—between the races of the north and the aborigines whom they found in possession of India. The base, then, of caste, we may rest assured, was simply the result of a people, or rather of peoples, wishing to keep themselves uncontaminated when coming in contact with a debased population. This was exactly the case with the Jews. They were simply a very strongly-guarded caste, with a number of regulations as to what they were and were

not to eat, and with rules which prohibited them intermarrying or associating with peoples with whom they came in contact. Many of those rules may seem to us ridiculous and fanciful, but they were calculated to prevent the Jews from any chance of adopting the manners and customs of the peoples around them; and the Indians, having had similar views, naturally adopted similar means. Such, then, is a brief generalisation of the causes which led to caste laws, which were, no doubt, carried in some instances to a ridiculous length, but which were founded in common sense, and were admirably adapted to carry into effect the opinions of the superior races.

We have now, in the second place, to consider caste with reference to the approach of native converts to the Lord's table, the sitting apart of the various castes in church, and the effects of caste as regards what is called social intercourse.

The whole difficulty of the caste question, as regards the sacrament, lies in this, namely, that a high-caste vegetarian objects to drink wine at the same time and after a low-caste meat-eater. And here I find a great difficulty in finding words or illustrations that will at all convey the feelings of a high-caste vegetarian at the very idea of drinking after a low-caste carrion-eater. If from the lowest, filthiest, and most poisonous dens in London, you were to take a man reeking with beer and tobacco, and with his clothes crawling with vermin, and presenting, in short, every appearance of foulness, dirt, and disease; if you were to take that man and place him between two ladies at the administration of the Holy Communion, I do not say that they would there and then refuse the sacrament on these terms, but I think

we may be pretty sure that, from sanitary motives, if from no others, they would in future take the sacrament in a place where they would not be liable to such contact. Their feelings and senses would be shocked by such contact as I have imagined, but their sensations would merely bear the same proportion to the sensations of a high-caste vegetarian Hindoo who had to drink after a Pariah that a trifling cause of disgust would bear to the most intolerable and lasting degradation. Now, to people in this country this may seem an extraordinary thing; but they will think it less extraordinary when I tell them that, if I could not take the sacrament unless amongst Pariahs, I would never take it again, unless, perhaps, I was to put myself bodily into one of Professor Tyndall's cotton-gauze air-cleansers, and drink the sacramental wine after it had been boiled at a temperature of 212°, and passed through a filter. And when I talk of the lowest castes as carrion-eaters, I must tell the reader that I am not in the slightest degree guilty of exaggeration, and that they are carrion-eaters in exactly the same sense that vultures are carrion-eaters. In fact, these men never get any meat unless that of animals that have died of disease; and as in these climates decomposition is extremely rapid, the reader can imagine the result of coming in contact with a man who has, perhaps, a few hours before been eating a mass of diseased and half-decomposed meat. And in case the reader should not be able to imagine what the result is, I may mention the following circumstance. A few days after I had killed a bison I had occasion to point out some pieces of sawn wood which I wished to be removed from the jungle to my house, and I accordingly took with me a native overseer, and two coolies to carry the

timber. When I was pointing out the pieces to them, I smelt a strong smell of putrid meat, which seemed to fill the air so entirely that I at once concluded that a tiger must have killed some animal and left the carcass near the spot. My overseer and myself looked about everywhere, but at last happening to pass the coolies, I at once perceived that the smell arose from their breath, and on questioning them, I found that before coming to work they had been feasting on decayed bison flesh. In fact, after killing a bison, we could never go near our coolies for some days afterwards. But to see a party of these men sitting like vultures around the carcass of some animal that has just died of some abominable disease is quite enough to inspire even an unprejudiced European meat-eater with the most wholesome horror; and the reader need not, I think, be surprised at the feelings of disgust which these men's habits inspire amongst the respectable classes of the community. But independently of all feelings of disgust, there are sanitary considerations which are of infinitely more importance. For it so happens that, at a time when the weather is hottest and the season most unhealthy, a larger number of animals die; and I have very little doubt that this eating of rotten meat causes amongst the Pariahs a large quantity of disease, and especially of cholera, which they would not fail to disseminate with fatal certainty amongst all classes, were the native Christians compelled to take the sacrament indiscriminately. And, in my own experience, I have observed that cholera has passed through districts, that the upper classes have been free from it, but that amongst the lower the victims were many. And the same sanitary reasons that apply to the sacrament apply

equally well to the mixing of castes indiscriminately in the churches; for it might so happen, as it frequently does, that fever and cholera may be prevalent amongst the lower castes, while the higher may be at that time comparatively free from such diseases. So that when we take all these points into consideration, we shall find that the German missionaries were perfectly right in placing the men of the higher caste on one side of the church, and those of the lower on the other, and that they were equally right in allowing the higher castes to approach the sacrament at a different time from the lower. I may here remark that I once mentioned this taking of the sacrament in a sort of order of precedence to a clergyman in a country parish, when he told me that exactly the same sort of thing occurred in his parish, and that the lord of the manor invariably took the sacrament first, and, if I recollect rightly, the parish clerk last; and a special instance of this in a Scotch parish was mentioned to me not long ago.

The same sanitary considerations will also naturally be of value when we come to consider that indiscriminate social intercourse which the missionaries so much insist upon as one of the necessary signs of grace. I do not, of course, say that it is not advisable, and that it would not be desirable to see a little more intercourse between class and class than exists at present. But between all the better classes there is a much greater degree of intercourse than our missionaries would have us believe; and it is not true that one caste will eat only the food prepared by a person of his own caste. I cannot, of course, say what may be the case as regards other parts of India; but, as regards my own district, each caste will eat of the food prepared by any of the castes higher,

or at least purer, than its own. For instance, a Gouda, who will not allow that the Lingayet caste is better than his own, will eat of food prepared by a Lingayet, while a Lingayet will not eat of food prepared by a Gouda. And the explanation of this is, that the Lingayet is a vegetarian, and meat might have been boiled in the Gouda's pots, while there would be nothing to offend the Gouda customs in the pots of a vegetarian host. But in these matters I entirely agree with the good Bishop Heber, who said that we had no right to interfere in their private life, or to meddle in any way with their social customs, as long as there was no idolatry in them.

Turning now to the third point I proposed to consider, I have a few remarks to make regarding the only (from a Christian point of view) solid objection that can, I conceive, be made to the institution of separate orders of men; namely, that the tendency of caste is to shut up the bowels of compassion towards all the world outside of a man's particular class. And here I confess that I am very much in want of information, and can think of no unprejudiced individuals to whom to apply for the facts as really existing in other parts of India. As for books, when I look into them for any information, I am at once met by quantities of unlimited condemnations, or a host of contradictory statements. And, as an instance of the latter, I may mention that in Kerr's "Domestic Life of the Natives of India" we are informed, at page 31, that "alms are given to the poor without distinction of caste," while at page 343 of the same volume we are told that "to extend kindness and hospitality to one of a different caste is regarded as sinful." But in matters of this sort we want the

experience of individuals who have actually lived amongst the people, as much as any one can who is not actually one of them. As for my own part of the country, I can answer for it that caste has no such effect as has been alleged to arise from it regarding the extension of hospitality and kindness to people of various castes. And the reader may recollect that, in my chapter on Native Character, I mentioned the fact that I had found members of every caste assembled at the house of a todyman to inquire how he was, and to see whether they could do anything for him. These tody-drawers rank at least third amongst the castes in Munzerabad, and though none of the members of the farmer caste above them would eat of food prepared in a tody-drawer's house, yet there were numbers of both castes present. This feeling would not, that I am aware of, go as far as one of the carrion-eating Pariahs, but I am quite certain that it would extend to any other caste but theirs in the country. But on this point I do not offer any decided opinion, as, for what I know to the contrary, acts of kindness and hospitality may, no doubt, often have been extended even to the lowest. And I may also mention here that I have slept in the verandah of a farmer's house, in which members of the family slept close to some of my people, who were of the tody-drawer caste above alluded to, and who, I am sure, were quite as welcome as members of their own caste would have been. But as regards all these matters concerning the inner life of the people we know nothing, unless we actually live amongst them, and sleep in their houses, and, in fact, see the people at home; and as it is extremely difficult to find any one who has done anything of the kind, it naturally follows

that it is almost impossible to find anything like reliable sources of information regarding native habits throughout India. You may, it is true, stuff your very soul with information of some sort or other, if you go about asking questions, but if you do you will find yourself much in the same predicament that Johnson found himself in his tour to the Hebrides; and the reader may recollect that the worthy doctor very soon found that nothing could be more vague, unsatisfactory, and uncertain than the answers of an unsophisticated simple people, who were not much in the habit of being asked questions of any sort. However, the reader may, in the meantime, reasonably infer that the conduct of the people in the rural districts of India, and situated under similar circumstances, would not materially differ, as regards matters of caste, from the practice as existing in Munzerabad. And should that turn out to be the case, it is plain that those notions, as regards the practice of caste, which have been so industriously circulated in England, are almost entirely false.

I have said that I proposed inquiring, further, whether there are not some compensating advantages in this division of the people into castes which tend, in a great measure, to neutralise the prejudicial effects that arise from people's sympathies and feelings being more or less confined to members of their own caste, instead of being distributed over the human race considered as a whole. Now, it is perfectly true that the tendency of caste is to weaken the claim that humanity in general has on an individual; but though the claim of society in general is weakened, it must be remembered that the claims of each caste on the members of it are strengthened. And though this fact may militate against an enlarged and

Christian philanthropy, the aggregate force of claims will be found to amount to a much larger sum than if one part of a society had no more claim on a man than another. A man of one caste would not, for instance, perhaps feel that a man of another caste had much claim on him; but he would distinctly and strongly feel that a member of his own caste had. And every caste acting on the same principle of supporting and helping its members, I am convinced that the aggregate force of assistance rendered must be greater than in a country where there is little or no caste principle. This may seem a rash assertion, and of course it is one that it is impossible, as far as I am aware, to prove. But the fact that there is not a poor-house from one end of India to the other, seems to me a significant and satisfactory circumstance; and the only way I can account for there being no need of such a thing is,* that caste feeling must often come in where all other aids fail. Nor are we in this country without instances of the value of caste feelings, and both the Jews and the Scotch may still be pointed to as illustrations of what I mean. A Scotchman still has a sort of caste feeling for a Scotchman, and would do things for a man, as a Scotchman, that he would not do for people of either English or Irish descent. This principle may now have lessened, and is, no doubt, daily lessening. But when I started in the world, fifteen years ago, I very soon experienced the benefit of this caste feeling; and, as one illustration to the point, I may mention that, before my estates came into bearing, I was attended in a long and serious illness by two Scotch doctors (one of whom attended on me for six weeks incessantly), both of whom resolutely

* In the large towns this remark might not, perhaps, be justifiable.

declined any remuneration whatever. I cannot, of course, positively assert that these gentlemen would not have attended me on the same terms had I been an Englishman, but, from my general experience with other doctors, I am sure that these gentlemen must have been not a little influenced by caste feeling. And I have no doubt whatever that the way the Scotch get on, wherever they go, is to be attributed, in no small measure, to the existence of the same feeling. It may seem to many of my readers that to use the term caste as a principle which impels one Scotchman to help another is not exactly correct; and I must admit to having some doubts on the subject myself. The case of the Jews, however, admits of none; and, if ever there was a caste of people in the world, in the strict Hindoo sense, they are certainly an unmistakable example. And what are the results of caste feeling with them? As to other parts of the world I have no precise information; but in England I have ascertained from the best authority that caste feeling has produced some extremely favourable results. In the first place, Jews are seldom or never found in our workhouses; and all cases of poverty are carefully investigated by a visiting committee, or board of guardians, and relief or employment is always afforded to every Jewish pauper. Then, again, no Jewish child ever was, and no Jewish child is now, without the means of obtaining elementary instruction; and it would be difficult to find an English Jew unable to read and write. Means are taken to secure the attendance of all poor children, and a sound middle-class education is afforded, while the study of the Hebrew language is compulsory. There are only, it may be added, about twenty Jewish (principally foreigners)

convicts in England, and no female convict is to be found.

Another of the principal complaints brought against caste is the fact that it has a tendency to keep one caste fixed below another; but even here we shall find some compensating considerations which are of great value. For, if caste in this respect has a keeping-down tendency, it has also a levelling one. It may keep one order above another, but within the limits of that caste order it has a levelling tendency, and in one respect the poorest of each class feel themselves on a level with the richest. Nor is a poor man of good caste made to experience the bitter sense of degradation which falls to the lot of a gentleman who, from poverty and misfortune, has fallen out of his original class into another far below him. The Indian may descend into the most humble spheres; but, if he attends to the regulations of his caste, he is always a member of it, and his feelings of self-respect are maintained by the fact that, however poor, it is quite possible that his daughter may be married by a man of wealth and position. But in this country, where a man has gone a long way down the hill, when he has descended—as many gentlemen especially do in our colonies—into the lower ranks of life, he loses all connection with people who are of his own rank by birth. I do not, of course, mean to allege that this want of caste feeling is to be lamented with us, but I am merely stating facts which seem to me to show the number of ways in which this much-reviled caste system can be proved to have compensating advantages which tend to counterbalance the drawbacks of the situation.

Before proceeding to sum up the contents of this chapter,

it may be useful to make a few remarks as to the way in which caste laws act as regards the social condition of people who have by wealth raised themselves above the general average of their order; and I shall, at the same time, notice a few instances that have fallen within my observation as to the way in which caste laws of the most stringent nature are occasionally set aside by universal consent.

The old idea we entertained of caste was that, to use the words of Tennent, "each class is stationed between certain walls of separation, which are impassable by the purest virtue or the most conspicuous merit;" or that, to come to more recent times, and to use the words of the late Mr. Wilson, in his speech before leaving for India, "in India you see people tied down by caste, and, whatever their talents or exertions may be, they cannot rise." Now, the history of many families that have risen to eminence entirely belies this assertion; and the evidences are so numerous, that I need not weary the reader by quoting them. But one instance I may perhaps mention, as the circumstances seem to me somewhat extraordinary, and a reference to them here may induce some one to make more particular inquiries in the locality alluded to. Buchanan notices that "in Bhagulpore there were certain families who, from having adopted a pure life, had, within the memory of man, risen from the lowest dregs of the people to the highest ranks of the nobility." In this instance, however, I cannot help suspecting that the families must have risen on something more substantial than their pure habits. But in matters of this sort we are very much in want (as indeed we are on almost every Indian subject) of more detailed, and particularly substantiated,

evidence. As regards the subject of low castes raising themselves in the social scale, I know of no instances that have fallen within my own observation; but I have obtained information from other parts of Mysore, the truth of which I have no reason to doubt, although I would advise the reader to receive what I have to say on this point with the same caution that he should receive all information which is even in the smallest degree removed from the experience of personal observation. With this caution I may, then, observe that, from information I have received, I have ample reason to believe that, in the interior of Mysore, there are many families of Pariahs who are as well off, in point of cattle, cash, and land, as the average of the farmer caste, notwithstanding that the forefathers of these Pariahs were merely the servants of the farmer tribe. Nor is this all. Many instances, I believe, may be pointed out of members of the farmer tribe being the tenants of the once-despised Pariah. The Pariah, it is true, does not reap all the advantages from his altered circumstances that might be expected in other countries, but it is a mistake to suppose that wealth does not tell in India, as it does elsewhere. The well-to-do Pariah (and in the Nuggur division of Mysore I am told there are many such) receives that respect which is invariably paid to those who have much substance. He no longer stands respectfully without the verandah of a farmer of ordinary position, but takes his seat in the verandah itself, and on terms of perfect equality. But the farmer will not eat with his visitor, nor give him his daughter in marriage. This, to us, would be a disagreeable reflection, no doubt; but, in their present political state, I cannot see that the happiness or prosperity of the people is in any way

affected by these facts, nor am I aware that any one has attempted to prove that the natural comforts of the people have been in any way lessened by these social separations.

Turning now to glance at the way in which caste laws are sometimes set aside, it is impossible to avoid suspecting that the instances given of caste feeling in these respects, though perhaps true in themselves, are not fair examples of what would universally occur in cases of emergency, even with the most caste-observing people in India. From the instances given (and those most commonly given refer to natives preferring to die of thirst rather than take water from the hands of a person of inferior caste), people are led to believe that under no circumstances will a breach of caste take place, or be overlooked if it does take place, by members of the caste. But the instances I have to give seem to point to a contrary conclusion, and, if that is the case with people whom I know to be extremely strict, it seems very probable that we have adopted some very exaggerated notions as to the rigidity of caste laws. And what has contributed not a little to these delusions is, that tricky servants frequently make caste a most convenient pretence for avoiding to do this or that, or as an excuse wherever an excuse is for any purpose convenient. But however all this may be, the reader may form his opinions from the instances I have to give.

The first instance I have to give of violation of caste law is certainly the most extraordinary that I ever heard of. The act was, indeed, a remarkable and touching tribute of regard, or I may even say of affection, on the part of a native overseer of the farmer caste in Munzerabad, and was a better monument than any that

could have been erected to one of the best and most unselfish men I have ever met. When Mr. W—— (my late manager) unhappily died on the estate, this overseer in question (who, I may mention, was one of the party that forcibly opposed my clearing the forest when I started in 1856), understanding that it was considered by us as an honour to the deceased, volunteered to make one of the carrying party. This extraordinary determination was absolutely forbidden by the caste potail, or head man, who was present; but Rama Gouda* showed the same coolness and resolution that he always did in the case of a bear or a tiger, and simply saying, "Let my caste go to-day," he made one of the carrying party, in spite of every remonstrance. Hundreds of all castes were present, but so strong were their feelings of regard for Mr. W——, that no notice whatever was taken of the offence, which was so publicly committed. The repugnance of all castes, except the very lowest, to touching the body of a European, is very well known to every one who has been in India, and so fearful was the caste head man of sanctioning, even with his presence, this violation of caste law, that he immediately went home.

In the next instance I have to give, one of the Lingayet caste (vegetarians, and abstainers from intoxicating drinks) was wounded by a tiger, and there was a caste question raised, as to whether, under the circumstances, he should take wine. The occurrence came about in this way. Some miles from my house I once wounded a tiger, somewhat late in the day, and, owing to the broken nature of the ground, and a general confusion that

* The farmers in Munzerabad invariably tack on the word "Gouda" to their names, and it seems to answer for our Mr.

seemed to take possession of the people, it seemed impossible to bring the affair to a satisfactory conclusion, so I went home. The following morning I returned to take up the track of the tiger, but it was unluckily reported that the animal had quitted the jungle we had left him in, so the party (I having been posted at a point where the tiger would probably break cover, in case the report should prove false), it appears, blundered carelessly into the place where the animal had been last seen the evening before. Now, this particular spot was full of a long sort of reed that grows in swampy ground, so that the people could not see far before them, and, to make a long story short, it seems that the tiger bided his time, sprang suddenly into the party, and gave one of them a fatal bite in the loins. The moment I heard the three roars, I expected that something disagreeable must have occurred, and at once called for my sandwiches, partly to fill up the time that would elapse before intelligence of what had occurred should reach me, and in order that my stomach and nervous system might not be affected by attending to any man who might be wounded. On arrival at the scene of events, I found a fine young fellow of the Lingayet caste lying bathed in blood, and my people vainly endeavouring to stanch the wounds. He was half swooning away from loss of blood, and I offered him some wine to keep up his strength. This, however, he refused to take, unless the head man of his village, who happened to be present, would consent. The head man, evidently wishing to shirk the responsibility, shook his head doubtfully; but the members of his caste all called out—"It's no matter; let him drink;" and he drank accordingly. While this was going on, I had a rough stretcher made, and, doing up his wounds as

well as we could, sent him off on the way to his village. While we were attending to the wounded man, rather an amusing incident occurred. It appears that when the tiger charged, one of the party, a tody-drawer, at once climbed up a tree, and when the party retreated, carrying off the wounded, he was afraid to come down. His absence had not been remarked, and when we were engaged in doing up the wounded man, the todyman, who had taken heart and come down, slunk quietly out of the jungle, and startled some of the party not a little, as they thought that it was perhaps the tiger coming down on them again. However, this todyman reported that the tiger was still almost in the same spot where he had been lying when he made his attack; and I then proposed we should go into the jungle, and see how we liked the look of him. But the tiger had given such indications of temper that the main body of the people seemed to have no desire to see him again, and I think that only ten (and those mostly my own tenants) accompanied me. As I was, Europeanly speaking, single-handed, this may have seemed an imprudent course, and no doubt it was not altogether unattended with danger; but it luckily turned out that the tiger was stone dead, though he was lying in such a natural position that we had some doubts as to whether he might not be shamming, even when we got within fifteen yards of him. As we were skinning the tiger, the wounded man (who had by that time only been carried a few hundred yards) expired; so, observing that it was "written on his forehead," * we took up our man and our skin, and went home.

* The natives imagine that every man's fate is written in invisible characters on his forehead.

These instances of infringement of caste rules will show the reader the way in which they are sometimes abandoned; and I could mention other minor points where I have seen them occasionally abandoned. But not only are these rules thus, on urgent occasions, summarily set aside, but within a very short distance I have observed an alteration of custom. For instance, on our side of the river which separates our county from the next, neither the farmers nor the tody-drawers will eat of an animal that has even been touched after death by a Pariah; whereas, on the other side of the river, the Pariahs who came out shooting not only touched, but carried a couple of wild boars we had killed. And yet the people on one side of the river were exactly of the same caste as those on the other. But the fact seems to be, that many of the minor points of what is called caste law have arisen from some accident, and in the course of time have hardened into local customs.

And here, before bringing this chapter to a close, I find it impossible to refrain from again alluding to the numerous instances where caste has been made the common scapegoat of every Indian difficulty. What is the meaning of this? What is the meaning of that? Why won't the natives do this, and why won't they do that? Caste—and caste is the common refuge; and with most of our countrymen who have tried to introduce new customs or a new religion, caste has ever been a handy and convenient peg on which to hang any difficulties they may meet with, or any problem they cannot readily solve. In short, it is hard to say what difficulty has not been disposed of in this fashion. Let us glance at two instances to illustrate my meaning.

For the first instance I cannot select, perhaps, a

better example than that afforded by the Rev. G. U. Pope, in the notes he has made when editing a second edition of the valuable work of the Abbé Dubois. And, in alluding to these foot-notes, it is impossible to repress some feeling of annoyance that the valuable work of the Abbé should, in an evil hour, have fallen into the hands of a writer who has thought fit often, in a few brief and contemptuous words, summarily to dismiss and overrule those conclusions which were the result of a life spent on more intimate terms with natives than any I have ever been able to hear of. And Mr. Pope's statements are the more calculated to impose on the general reader, as he speaks of having had "more than twenty years of a somewhat intimate intercourse with the Hindoos;" the fact being that he spent the greater part (in fact, all but a few years, as far as I have been able to ascertain) as head of the Grammar School on the Neilgherry Hills, where he had no more opportunity of having any intercourse with natives than a Hindoo would have of gaining experience of the natives of England, were he to take up his residence on the Grampians, and interchange a few words occasionally with the shepherds of those mountains. But as to what caste has done. "Caste," says Mr. Pope, "has prevented the Hindoos from availing themselves of the opportunities afforded them of acquiring the sciences, arts, and civilisation of nations with whom they have come into contact." Caste, "the great petrifier," we are again told, is the real cause of the stagnation that everywhere abounds. Caste, again, "upholds immutable distinctions by arbitrary and absurd laws, which are enforced by irresponsible authority, and maintains a standard of right and wrong entirely independent of

the essential principles of moral science;" and, in order that everything may be included at one blow, we are finally told, in a note appended to the remarks of the Abbé on the moral and social advantages of caste, that "caste, and its offspring custom, are among the hindrances to all good in India."

But it is still more curious to observe how men of intelligence and observation can be led, by the force of inherited opinion, into statements as to the effects of caste which are actually contradicted by their own experience. And in Mr. Raikes's interesting work, "Notes of the North-Western Provinces," we find an instance of how people will always attribute everything to this universal bugbear. Observing on the pride of high caste, "which withers whatever it touches," Mr. Raikes informs us that the Brahmins and Rajpoots of the rich province of Benares will not touch the plough, owing to pride of caste. He next tells us that caste is little regarded to the north of Allahabad, where, from various causes, the demand for labour is greater. All of which, being traced to its true cause, simply amounts to this, namely, that where landed proprietors of good family are well off, they naturally do not care to work, and that in another part of the country, where they are not well off, or cannot find labour, they do work. In the same way, the author, after telling us that infanticide has at one time or other been common all over the world, tells us that in India it is entirely caused by caste. Now, if we take caste to mean family pride solely, it certainly has influenced the matter, or at least tended to maintain the evil complained of; but I know of one instance, at least, in India, where infanticide can be traced to satisfactory causes, and amongst a people who

have always been observed to be remarkably free from what are called caste prejudices. The Toda tribe, on the Neilgherry Hills, are polyandrists, and, in order to keep down the number of the tribe, they naturally had recourse to female infanticide. This they have now abandoned, and my Toda guide very soon told me the reason. He said, "Formerly we used to kill the females, because we had little more than the produce of our buffaloes to depend on; but now that more people have flocked to the hills we can let our lands, and get plenty to eat." He added, also, that the Government had ordered them not to kill their children; but, unless their means had improved, it is plain that a Government order would have had little effect. But, as regards this subject of infanticide, it seems to be a thing difficult to avoid, whenever conditions arise which are favourable to its extension; nor will repressive measures alone ever place any very complete check upon it. Like every other demand, it rises and falls with the necessities of the situation, and can never be originally caused by anything in the shape of caste feelings or regulations. And, in accordance with the necessities of the situation, we see that in this country it has arisen to what some may call an alarming extent, and the disclosures of baby-farming show that infanticide has here become thoroughly naturalised. But it unfortunately seems that infanticide under repression operates more disadvantageously than infanticide which has been unrestrained by penal enactments; and we need not require any very lengthened arguments to show that unrestricted infanticide is at once more merciful and more effectual than that miserable copy which our civilisation has compelled people to have recourse to here. I do not, of course,

blame our legislation on these subjects; I am merely pointing to the results of restricted freedom, and it is impossible to refrain from coming to the conclusion that this restriction of free action, if it has limited some evils (which may be doubted), has also caused others which have a more than counterbalancing effect. A tribe or race of people, foreseeing evils of various kinds that must arise from over-population, takes effectual means of limiting the evils by inflicting a momentary physical pain on a being insensible to any other feeling. The objects selected for destruction being those which cause a multiplication of the evil from which the people wish to be delivered, they therefore march upon their object with a clearly-defined method. But in this country, the remedy, which a multiplicity of causes has called into action, acts fitfully, and acting timidly and indecisively, an immense amount of suffering ensues from the slow doing to death of those unhappy children, the remains of which are so frequently discovered. But here I find that, instead of closing this chapter, I am insensibly wandering into a discussion as to what may be called comparative infanticide, a subject which I fancy is well-nigh inexhaustible. The matter, however, is one of considerable interest, and my object in alluding to it at such length is merely with the view of inducing others, whenever they meet with infanticide in India, or in other parts of Asia, to trace out the causes that have led to it. One thing, however, we may consider as certain, and that is, that infanticide must always originate from the necessities of the situation; and amongst these necessities I, of course, include the desire to avoid shame, or the prospect of shame in the family, or starvation, as well as the fact that women are an encumbrance to some

tribes. Some people, I may add, are under the impression that polyandric habits, when once established, become necessarily a cause of infanticide. But we have no means of knowing that this was ever the case, while the Coorgs may be pointed to as a race who once were polyandrous, but who were never, that I am aware of, accused of infanticide. The explanation of this, I apprehend, is to be found in the fact that their circumstances were comfortable enough to preclude any necessity for keeping down the population.

It is time now that I should bring this chapter to a close, and I accordingly proceed to sum up those conclusions which I assume to have been established; but in doing so I shall, however, merely take notice of those points which seem to me to be of paramount importance.

In the first place, then, we compared the morality of our British counties, as regards the connection of the sexes and the use of alcohol, with the morality of the Indian county of Munzerabad; and, having come to the conclusion that the morality of Munzerabad is superior, I think we are justified in concluding that the morality of Munzerabad, being mainly maintained by caste, the laws of caste have acted more effectually than all the religious instruction that has for centuries been lavished on the people of this country; or, to put the case in shorter terms, we may assert that, as regards the branches of morality alluded to, caste has beaten Christian influences.

In the next place, we took into consideration the action of our missionaries as regards caste, and, having seen that they have always insisted on their converts entirely renouncing customs which can be proved to produce the most valuable results, we came to the con-

clusion that it has been a fortunate thing for India that its peoples have rejected our hide-bound interpretation of Christianity. We then inquired as to whether the missionaries had any right to debar from the advantages of Christianity those who, wishing to become Christians, yet desired to retain their social customs; and, having come to the conclusion that there is nothing idolatrous in these customs, we have distinctly asked those interpreters of Christianity whom we have in India to tell us by whose authority they have ventured to act in a way which, as has been shown, the apostles never did as regards the prejudices of their Jewish converts. And generally, as regards the action of our missionaries in this matter, we have felt ourselves justified in asserting that our English missions have inflicted an incalculable injury on the cause of Christianity, by presenting it to the people of India as something that must necessarily tear the whole framework of their society to pieces.

We then inquired more particularly into the origin of caste, and, having seen that it never could have originated in the way our missionaries suppose it to have done, we hazarded a conjecture as to the way in which it probably did originate, and saw grounds for supposing that the distinctions of caste came naturally about, and that they were in principle calculated to effect exactly the same ends that the Jewish lawgivers had in view when they framed that Levitical law which effectually prevented the Jews from mingling socially with the races they lived amongst. We then looked at caste from a sanitary point of view, and came to the conclusion that, in consequence of the carrion-eating habits of the lowest castes, and of their liability to transmit the germs of

disease, the rules which prevented them from coming into contact with the higher castes, either in the way of taking the sacrament, or in any other way, are of the greatest value. We next inquired into the effects of caste as regards social intercourse, and especially as regards the exercise of hospitality amongst people of different castes, and saw reason to think that the restrictions of caste, with, perhaps, the exception of the very lowest, formed no bar whatever to the exercise of hospitality. Glancing subsequently at the action of caste feeling in confining the sympathies of individuals more especially to the members of their own caste, we came to the conclusion that though caste had undoubtedly the effect of contracting the feelings within a narrow circle, there was to be found a compensating advantage in the fact that the claims of caste produced, in the aggregate, a greater amount of charity, and, in short, were calculated to produce a better general result than would be arrived at in the absence of caste feelings. And, as illustrations of the advantages of this caste feeling, we pointed to the fact of there being no poor-houses in India, and especially to the Jews in England, as affording an example of the favourable effects of caste feeling. After this, we pointed to the fact that, though caste had the effect of keeping one caste or order of men above another, it had also a levelling tendency within each caste, and produced an important point of equality which no poverty can destroy. We then took into consideration some facts which seemed to show that families could raise themselves to a higher rank in society by adopting the purer habits of the classes above them; and we also saw that the influence of wealth does, to a very great degree, elevate a man of low caste in the

social scale. We next saw reason to suppose that we have hitherto been labouring under very exaggerated notions as to the stringency of caste regulations, and two instances were given to illustrate the way in which caste laws are sometimes set summarily aside. And, finally, we pointed out, and gave some illustrations to prove, that, with most of our countrymen who have either tried to introduce new customs or in any way to alter native habits of action, caste has ever been made, and very unjustly made, the common scapegoat.

One word more. The absolute good that caste has done may be briefly summed up. It has acted as a strong moral police, and as a preserver of order and decorum in the community,* and it has prevented the spread of bad habits and customs, more especially that of drinking, as far as large numbers of the people are concerned.† On the other hand, caste is said to have hindered the progress of the people taken as a whole. But in every instance where we have really tried the introduction of any art, the removal of any public crime (as suttee and human sacrifice, for instance), the improvement of any cultivation, the introduction of education, or of new means of moving from place to place, we have either found caste to be no impediment at all, or an impediment so slight as not to be worth mentioning.

* Abbé Dubois.

† It is satisfactory to learn that caste feelings and regulations have a favourable influence with natives, even when they go to a foreign country; and it is equally satisfactory to quote the evidence of a gentleman who laughs at caste as an absurd custom. Mr. W. Labonadière, in his work of "The Coffee Planter in Ceylon," writes as follows: "The coolies who resort to Ceylon are of various castes. Those mostly preferred by planters are the low castes, such as 'polleus' (*sic*), shanars, and pariahs, as being more accustomed to and fit for hard work; but, as a class, they are more given to drink, spend their money more freely, and are more quarrelsome than the higher classes, whom their caste forbids to drink arrack or spirits, and who are more cleanly in their habits, better behaved (as fearing to lose caste), who have land of their own on the coast, and are more interested in working regularly and gaining their wages to take away with them."

CHAPTER VII.

RELIGION.

When, talking about the Indian faith, Dean Swift said that "to me the difference appears little more than this, that they are put oftener upon their knees by their fears, and we by our desires," he hit with exact accuracy the prevailing features in the thoughts and feelings expressed in Asiatic as compared with European religions. We look forward to something positive; and our prayers are full of expressions which show that we not only expect a cessation of evil, and pain, and sorrow, but the accession of positive and exalted happiness. They, on the other hand, want merely to be let alone, and to be allowed a perfect rest from pain, and care, and worry. We look forward to a glorious resurrection, when the soul, some think directly, and others think after having gone through a purgatory process, shall enter into possession of supreme happiness. Their ideas, at the best, are only that we shall go through purgatory in order to be punished for what we have done wrong; and as to what may come after, they do not know, nor apparently do they much care. Nor, because we find in their older writings hopes of happiness hereafter, does that at all alter the general facts as regards the body of the people. They are still, as ever, sent to their knees

by their fears, and this, too, entirely irrespective of the speculative opinions as expressed in the ancient Hindoo or Buddhist writings. And everywhere do we find the same spirit prevailing. James Bruce asked the people in Ceylon why they thought so much of their devil-worship, and took so little heed of Buddha. "Oh!" they answered, "Buddha is a good god, and he won't do us any harm, while devils will bring upon us all manner of evils;" and throughout India we find exactly the same principle. We find everywhere a vague belief in the one great God who delights not in harming mankind, and we find a positive and active belief in some evil-working spirit who requires to be constantly worshipped, and whose natural feelings of ill-will to man require to be repeatedly and incessantly appeased. With us the devil was never worshipped, and has now quite gone out of fashion; with them he is supreme. Let us inquire for a few moments into the causes of his supremity.

In considering these Asiatic peoples we must not consider them as merely putting up with the devil, on the principle that one thing is good until you have found a better. We must consider them as a people who have had a choice offered to them, and chances afforded of selecting one of two principles for adoration and worship. I do not say that both principles were offered simultaneously; on the contrary, it is probable that the evil principle was the only one that at all came home to them in the first instance; but it is certain that, in the Buddhism of Ceylon and the Brahminism of India, the people had a sufficient basis of information to go on, and exalted conceptions of the Deity presented for adoption, or at least within reach, if they had had an appetite to imbibe them. In short, they had a choice

between a religion in which are to be found lofty conceptions of good, and exalted examples of virtue and piety, and a system of paying homage to evil-working spirits, through whom it was imagined that all pain, and evil, and sorrow are brought about in this world. And the general result was, that they took to a great deal of devil-worshipping, and a very little, or in some instances none, of the worship of the great Ruler of the universe. From the devil they expected a great deal of harm and no good, and from God they expected no harm, nor any especial benefit. Now, the question is, what made them take this view and cling to it? and how is it, for instance, that to this day, when the hour of trial, and of pain, and sickness comes, the people converted to Christianity in Ceylon send for the devil-worshippers, though they are often turned out of the Christian church for so doing? The answer is simple, and has been made a hundred times before; but simple as it is, it is not so easily to be realised by people who, not having very much imagination, or never having been in tropical climates, are unable to realise the action on the mind of nature on a grand and overwhelming scale. But when we come to contrast the course and forces of nature in the tropics with the milder phenomena of Europe, we shall see little reason to wonder at the tendency to superstition being greater and more permanent in the East than in the West. When we come to consider that in Europe man is not held down by famines and by pestilence, that he has not been disturbed by storms of terrific violence, nor depressed by nature on the grandest and gloomiest scale, we cease to wonder at the bolder tone he takes, and that he endeavours more and more to assume an ascendency over nature. And in Europe itself, though

in a milder form, we see the same tendency prevailing; and accordingly we find in the mountaineers of the Tyrol and the Scottish Highlands a thousand superstitious fancies which are unknown to those who live amongst the quiet home-scenery of the civilised and cultivated regions. Nor in the tropical countries themselves are we without degrees of superstition, advancing and receding with the aspect of the scenery, and the violence or mildness of the phenomena of nature. On the western frontier hills, where the south-west monsoon bursts with tremendous force, and where man lives contiguous to those vast and gloomy forests which form the boundary between the civilisation of the table-land and the inhabited parts of the low country, the people are a thousand times more superstitious than they are in the open plains of the interior of the province. On the wild border-land the storm-gods come driving along, filling the air, and riding on the whirlwind, and the woods, and hills, and pools in the recesses of the forest are haunted and peopled with mysterious sprites, to whom man feels bound to pay homage under pain of incurring all manner of evils; but in the rolling plains of the table-land, where there is nothing of gloom or of grandeur, and where gentle showers and a tamer landscape take the place of those torrents of rain and those black masses of cloud which for weeks together shut out all signs of sun, moon, and stars, superstitious fancies are proportionately few, and man pays little heed, in consequence, to those principles of evil which are so assiduously worshipped in the wild mountains of the frontier.

We have now taken a general view of the situation, and of the fact that the religious system in vogue amongst the Indians consists of a devil-worship, varying

in intensity according to the general surroundings of the people, and of a knowledge and limited degree of worship of the great Ruler of the universe under one or other of his various manifestations.

Let us now take account of this worship of the great beneficent Ruler of the universe, the God of the ancient Vedic faith.

About twelve hundred years before Christ came upon the earth, there were collected a number of prayers and hymns somewhere in Northern India.* When and by whom they were composed is entirely uncertain. We only know that they were gathered together, that they were written in Sanscrit, that the work is the oldest known to exist in India, and that it is called the Rig-Veda. To the Rig-Veda were appended treatises called Brâhmanas, and after the Brâhmanas we come to a class of compositions called Aranyakas and Upanishads. Following on these, we arrive at the various systems of Hindoo philosophy. It is not, of course, my intention to attempt an account, or even the briefest analysis, of these ancient writings; and I only mention them with the view of alluding to certain general principles which are contained in what may be called the Hindoo scriptural books, and which are of the deepest interest, as showing what man's feelings and aspirations were in those ancient times—how man yearned to comprehend his God, how he speculated on the origin of the universe, and the ultimate destiny of the soul, and how he recognised the existence of sin, and strove to repent and be delivered from it. And on this acknowledgment of sin and desire for deliverance it is impossible to help quoting, as we pass along, that old Rig-Vedic prayer:—

* See Appendix E.

"May our sin, Agni, be repented of.

"Thou whose countenance is turned to all sides, art our defender: may our sin be repented of. Do thou convey us in a ship across the sea for our welfare: may our sin be repented of."

And equally impossible is it to pass over this touching Hindoo litany:—

"Let me not yet, O Varuna, enter into the house of clay; have mercy, Almighty, have mercy!

"If I go along trembling, like a cloud driven by the wind; have mercy, Almighty, have mercy!

"Through want of strength, thou strong and bright God, have I gone to the wrong shore; have mercy, Almighty, have mercy!

"Thirst came upon the worshipper, though he stood in the midst of the waters; have mercy, Almighty, have mercy!

"Whenever we men, O Varuna, commit an offence before the heavenly host; whenever we break thy law through thoughtlessness; have mercy, Almighty, have mercy!"

And in another hymn it is touchingly pleaded—

"It was not our doing, O Varuna, it was necessity, an intoxicating draught, passion, dice, thoughtlessness. The old is near to mislead the young; even sleep brings unrighteousness."

Here, then, we have decisive evidence of the recognition of sin, and the need for repentance. From this base naturally followed the idea of sacrifice for the remission of sins and the purification of the soul. And accordingly we find, in the ceremonies of the Soma sacrifice, a complete system by which man is cleansed from sin and born again; and by the drinking of the juice of the Soma-plant, which becomes itself divine, man participates in the nature of the Deity.

"We've quaffed the Soma bright,
And are immortal grown;
We've entered into light,
And all the gods have known.

"What mortal now can harm,
Or foeman vex us more?
Through thee, beyond alarm,
Immortal God, we soar."

In these books, then, we see the doctrine of one God, of the perception of sin, the need for repentance, the necessity for being born again, the doctrine of sacrifice with the view of being reconciled, the fact of a juice being drunk which was of divine nature, the entry of something divine into the nature of man, and the rising of the purified soul to God.

Whether these doctrines that were thought out of old were ever preached in earnest we have no means of knowing; but whether they were or not, we know as a fact that they must have been unsuited to the times, and to the intelligence of the people, and that, consequently, they bore no fruit. But though it has been complained that the worship and doctrines of the old Hindoos did not take a more practical turn, and push forward the mind into inquiries more advantageous to humanity, it must not therefore be supposed that doctrines so sublime passed through the air like a ship through the water, and left no trace behind. It was not for nothing that these old sages taught that God "is of infinite power, the ruler of the universe; that God is the gift of charity, the offering, the fire of the altar; that by God the sacrifice is performed; and that God is to be obtained by him who makes God alone the object of his works." It was not for nothing that God was made to speak, and say, "If any one offer me a leaf, a flower, fruit, or water with devotional intent, I accept it. Those who worship me with devotion dwell in me, and I also in them. Even women, Vaisyas, and Sudras take the highest path, if they come to me. Whatsoever thou doest, that do as an offering to me." It was not for nothing that they prayed, "From the unreal lead me to the real; from darkness lead me to light; from death to immortality."

Nor was it in vain that they taught that "the man who, performing the duties of life, and, quitting all interest in them, placeth them upon God, floats like a lotus on a lake, unruffled by the tide."

The effect of those waves of truth which originated with these old philosophers seems, at first sight, to have passed away as some empty sound, and to have been lost for ever. But truth once attained is never lost. It may be buried under the aberrations of ages; it may be smothered by the designs of an ambitious priesthood, and those heaps of eccentric novelties which the rambling nature of man delights to accumulate. But it is like latent heat and stored-up forces, which are not the less existent because our senses are unable immediately to detect them. In spite of every obstacle, those sublime doctrines have been handed on from generation to generation. They might burn dimly, but they still burned on, and every now and then struggled to the light. They appeared in Nanak, who established the faith of the Seiks. They came to the surface when Dâdû, the cotton-cleaner, preached, "Draw forth your mind from within, and dedicate it to God; because, if ye subdue the imperfections of your flesh, ye will think only of God." They came forth again in Tukaram, the shopkeeper, who promulgated doctrines as pure as ever emanated from the lips of man, and who taught that religious ceremonies and outward acts have no power to release from sin, and that, without faith, all is vain. Amongst those who have adopted the tenets of the Brahmo Somaj, these ancient doctrines have burst forth anew with a light and fervour that will never die. To the present day, amongst the rude hill-men of Munzerabad, the doctrine of the unity of God is still alive.

Just as life has been found in the polar ice, and in the lowest beds of the Atlantic, and just as it will again be found in many an unlooked-for place, so, when we bring a more delicate or searching observation to bear, do we find unexpectedly, and in corners where you would not be inclined to suspect its existence, a knowledge of the unity of God, and a groundwork from which we may safely build. "Why do you worship these various gods?" I once said to a rude, unsophisticated hill-man. "God is one." "I know that," he answered; "these are merely the peons of the great God." And in one of the ancient books God is made to say, "Those who worship the indivisible, unmanifested, omnipresent, are esteemed the most devoted; but the labour of directing thought to an object without manifest form is great, and with difficulty attained by mortals, and worship is recommended under the manifested form." "Why," again, I have often asked, "do you worship that image? Can any good come from a stone?" and the invariable answer was, "This, Wisdom, is only a form" (roopa).

How the sacerdotal tribe from whom the priests were selected gradually rose to power does not seem to be exactly known. But though we cannot mark the steps of their progress, we know that they took the steps that all priests must take who wish to command and maintain a dominant position; and even if we did not know the means they adopted, we might, from our knowledge of man, as safely infer them. Man being man on the banks of the Tweed, the Tiber, and the Ganges, we naturally find the Brahmin priest, the Roman Catholic priest, and the Scotch minister of the seventeenth century doing precisely the same things. We find them claiming

to be the sole interpreters of the sacred books, and the sole ministers of God on earth; and we find them establishing and regulating schools and colleges, and training up man in the groove they thought it best for him to work in. And the difficulties of the Brahmins seem to have been much the same as those of the Western priests. They had considerable difficulty in maintaining their authority, and found it no easy matter to obtain as much money as they thought to be their due. Their disciples were ever departing from the faith, and abandoning, or rather neglecting, the Brahminical worship to run after strange gods. But Brahminism never seems to have been the curse of India in the same sense that the persecuting priest became the curse of many a country in Europe. They were either wiser than their brethren in Europe, or they had not the same opportunities of doing evil; and hence it was that their influence remained unshaken, and was upheld with little change from generation to generation, and we may even say for thousands of years. But that power, so long maintained, has been shaken to its base, and already has almost crumbled away before that vast wave of thought which, emanating from the West, has silently spread from one end of India to the other, till in the remotest jungles it is boldly said that no one cares about the Brahmins now. And what is it we see rising amongst the ruins of these ancient forms of worship? And the answer comes, "Nothing, literally nothing."

I am now, with an object which will be distinctly declared further on, going to give at considerable length an account of the life, and a number of quotations from the writings, of an old Maharatta poet, who lived about the end of the sixteenth and the commencement of the

seventeenth century. The life and translations I take entirely from a most interesting article by Sir Alexander Grant, which appeared in the *Fortnightly Review* some years ago. And I quote these translations in particular, not because the sentiments contained in them are anything new, but because the well-known abilities of the translator afford ample proof that the writings of the Maharatta poet have been rendered with all possible accuracy and faithfulness. And in case to the English reader these sentiments of the poet may seem too exalted and pure to have emanated from any one who had not read the Bible, I may mention that these translations are alluded to at considerable length in "Mission Life," by a native, who signs himself "A Converted Brahmin." This gentleman, indeed, takes some exception to the translation of one or two terms; but he assures the reader that, so far from Tukaram's preaching containing anything uncommon, sentiments far more exalted can be found in the Bhagavata and other ancient Hindoo writings. And it is certainly satisfactory to have evidence from such a source that Tukaram's sentiments are rather below than above the tone of thought as expressed in the ancient Hindoo books.

Some time between the years 1588 and 1649 there lived, ten miles from Poona, and in the village of Dehu, a shopkeeper called Tukaram. He is said to have had two wives, and to have been rather unhappy in his domestic circumstances. Stories, too, are related to show his extreme simplicity and ignorance of worldly matters, and these are all the circumstances connected with his private life that we have any tradition of. He was of the sect of Vithoba-worshippers, which appears to have arisen in the fourteenth century. About this sect there

seems to be some difference of opinion; but Dr. Stevenson describes the worshippers of Vithoba as Bauddho-Vaishnavas, or a mixture of Buddhism with Vishnu-worship. But we have little to do here with the tenets of the sect that Tukaram belonged to, as our business is mainly to take a general survey of his feelings as shown in his works. We may, therefore, pass on to a consideration of his writings without further remark. But, before doing so, it may be as well to mention that about one hundred and fifty years after the worthy shopkeeper's death, his biography was written by the religious poet Mahipati, and here, of course, we find ourselves surrounded by the atmosphere of miraculous legend.

Tukaram, we are told, proceeded to the bank of the river Indrayani, where he composed certain songs and bade farewell to his friends. Then appeared a heavenly chariot, brighter than the sun, and the eyes of all were blinded as if by lightning; whereupon Tukaram entered the chariot and ascended to heaven, and the holy men he left on earth saw a long path leading into the world above; they heard bells ringing, and heavenly choristers praising God; and thus Tukaram departed. This happened in the morning; and the people, expecting his return, waited until the evening, when all went away but his fourteen disciples, who remained and continued fasting for three days. On the fifth day his cymbal and cloak fell down, whereupon they departed, and, having bathed, went to the temple. Now, Tukaram had promised, while yet on earth, to a certain Lingayet shopkeeper, to appear to him at his death, and accordingly, when the hour of death had arrived, Tukaram appeared; but the shopkeeper alone could perceive him, and though

he put sweet-smelling powder on Tukaram's forehead, and hung garlands around his neck, his friends saw no form but the garlands only, suspended apparently in the air. "To faithful men," says his biographer, "Tukaram still appears, and of this we have many witnesses. This Tukaram," he concludes, "the friend of the world, the good teacher, has been found by us. He dwells in the hearts of all. Through him has this book been composed."

There have been, and still are, many disputes amongst the Hindoos as to the best method of attaining God. Some think that there is no road like the road of faith; others, again, place reliance on the road of works; while others, again, think that the road of knowledge is the only one. Tukaram, however, pronounced decidedly in favour of the road of faith. And in doing so, he acted similarly to Dâdû, the cotton-cleaner, who, like Tukaram, attached the greatest importance to bhakti, a term which Sir Alexander Grant translates as faith, but which, according to Mrs. Manning, consists of a union of implicit faith with incessant devotion. When this was attained they thought it to be superior to works or knowledge. The Brahmins, on the other hand, taught the doctrine of a varied and expensive ceremonial, combined with good works and the pursuit of knowledge. The first was obviously a religion for the poor, and the second for the rich. And here we cannot fail to be struck with the exact resemblance between these opposite doctrinal opinions and those of the Calvinists and Arminians. The Calvinistic reliance on faith cost far less than the Arminian reliance on works. The cotton-cleaner and the shopkeeper had a natural tendency to exalt their cheap faith—which was within the reach of

the poorest, and placed the poorest and richest on an equality—over the expensive ceremonies of the Brahminical teachers. Nor will it satisfy man to say that a little work effected by him who has little is as much in the sight of God as much work effected by him who has much. The poor man would rather be put in a position where not even the shadow of apparent difference can be found. That position he absolutely obtains by the doctrines of faith and devotion, and these doctrines he naturally prefers. Hence, as an eminent author has shown, Calvinism is a sign of the democratic, and Arminianism of the aristocratic spirit. When society tends to equality, the former has a tendency to prevail, while the latter is predominant when the upper classes are very high and the lower very low.

I now proceed to give the whole of such portions of Tukaram as seem best to illustrate the tone of thought and feeling expressed by the Maharatta poet; and I purposely abstain from all comment, as it is better to allow Tukaram to speak entirely for himself. An explanatory note, however, has here and there been added.

I.

"Sing the song with earnestness, making pure the heart;
If you would attain God, then this is an easy way.
Make your heart lowly, touch the feet of saints,
Of others do not hear the good or bad qualities, nor think of them.
Tukâ says,—'Be it much or little, do good to others.'"

II.

"If you regard another's wife as your mother, what loss is it?
If you refrain from blaming others or coveting their wealth, is this any pain? Tell me,
If when you sit down, you utter the name of Râma, what labour is that?
Tukâ says,—'To obtain God, no other efforts are necessary.'"

III.

"There is no need to place the child in the mother's hands—
By her own instinct she draws it to her.
Why should I take thought? He whose business it is, will be responsible.
Without its asking, the mother keeps sweet things for the child,
(Else) in eating them she feels no satisfaction.
When it is engaged in play she seeks and brings it;
Sitting down, she presses it close to her breast.
When it is sick, she is restless as the parched corn on the fire.
Tukâ says,—'Take no thought for your own body—
The mother will not allow the child to be hurt.'"

IV.

"With all my heart, I am come to you for protection,
With body, and voice, and mind, O God.
Nothing else is admitted to my thoughts.
My desire remains fixed on you.
There is a heavy load on me,
Except you, who will remove it, O God?
I am your slave—you are my Master;
I have followed you from afar.
Tukâ says,—'I have put in an execution for debt,
Grant me a meeting for the settlement of accounts.'"

The last two lines, as Sir Alexander Grant points out, refer to the Indian custom of a creditor sitting down before the door of his debtor, and refusing to move till his claims have been satisfied.

V.

"Lowliness is good, O God; then no man's envy will prevail.
By a great flood trees are carried away,
While the rushes there remain;
If the waves of the river come,
They bend low and the waves pass over them.
Tukâ says,—'This is the fruit of falling low,
No man's strength will prevail against one.'"

VI.

"Spitting out greediness, pride, and hypocrisy, I sing the praise of God;
I am become indifferent to my body, I have no other desire but one.

Considering wealth to be like poverty, I have put it aside ;
Worldly distractions are removed, and Tukâ remains pure."

VII.

" For this cause I have endured toil,
Namely, that my last day might be sweet.
Now I have securely obtained rest,
The motion of my desires has ceased.
I rejoice at the outlay I have made,
By it I have got good fortune.
Tukâ says,—' Salvation is the bride I have married,
Now there shall be revelry for four days.' "

VIII.

" Pity, patience, calm, where these three are, there is the abode of God.
He came running to the house, and finding an asylum there, remains.
In the place where His praises are sung, as a crowd of beggars run (where there is a chance of alms), so he comes.
Tukâ says,—' By mention of his name, worship is performed, and God is obtained.' "

IX.

" For thinking upon God no separate time is required,
It should go on at all times ;
That mouth is blessed, which always utters ' Nárayan.'
Learn to place your affections on the highest,
All else that is spread out is in vain,
So Tukâ advises all men always."

X.

" Salvation is not difficult for us to obtain,
It is clearly to be found in the bundle on our back.
If we desire the pleasures of faith,
Our longing for them shall be satisfied.
You give, O God, each man his due and what is fit :
Acknowledging it to be good, I accept it readily.
Tukâ says,—' If you like, give me this world,
But give me an asylum for my affections.' "

"The great object of horror," says Sir Alexander Grant, "to the mind of a religious Hindoo, is the prospect of being born over and over again into this miserable world. Tukaram's resignation to the will of

God is so great, that he professes himself ready to bear this curse of prolonged individuality, provided only that, as long as he is in this world, he may have God as the object of his affections."

We now come to a denunciation of the uselessness of the ceremonies practised at one of the Hindoo festivals.

XI.

"When Jupiter enters Leo, the barbers and the priests enrich themselves;
In the mind are millions of sins,
But externally the man shaves his head and his beard.
What is shaved, that is removed,
But tell me, what is altered in the man?
His vices are not changed,
Which would be the sign of the removal of his sin.
'Without faith,' says Tukâ, 'all is in vain.'"

XII.

"This is called 'sin,' if doubt remains in the mind;
In the mind itself are both merit and guilt,
The highest good consists of noblest thoughts.
As is the seed, so are the fruits,
Excellent or inauspicious.
Tukâ says,—'To purify the mind, that is good.'"

XIII.

"Having gathered wealth by honest trade,
One should spend it with justice.
He alone will obtain an excellent end,
And will enjoy an excellent banquet,
Who does good to others, and knows not how to reproach them;
To whom others' wives are ever as sisters and mothers;
Who is merciful to the creatures, and cherishes cattle;
And in the desert gives water to the thirsty;
Who is calm and never blames any,
And exalts the dignity of his elders.
Tukâ says,—'This is the fruit of áshramas,*
The climax of asceticism.'"

* The "áshramas" are the four divisions of a Brahmin's life—bachelorhood, housekeeping, retirement, mendicancy.

XIV.

"He who calls those his own
Who are vexed and troubled,
He should be recognised as a saint:
God surely must dwell with him.
He that takes to his heart
One who has no protector,
And shows to his servants
The same kindness which he shows to his sons,
Tukâ says,—'Beyond all expression, he is the image of God.'"

The following expresses the small value of outward signs compared with the internal graces of the heart and mind:—

XV.

"Whoso is pure of heart and sweet of speech,
It matters not if he have a rosary on his neck or no.
Whoso has made clear the way of self-knowledge,
It matters not if he has clotted hair on his head or no.
Whoso is passionless towards his neighbour's wife,
It matters not if there be ashes on his body or no.
Whoso is blind to another's wealth and dumb in blaming,
You may point to him as a saint, says Tukâ."

The next stanza illustrates the strong hold that the doctrine of the eternal identity of the soul had on the mind of Tukaram. One school amongst the Hindoos holds that the soul, after final purification, is as a piece of salt when put into water. The piece of salt no longer exists, though the whole water has become salt. Another favourite illustration is that of likening body and soul to water enclosed in a bottle in the middle of the sea. The bottle at last is broken, and the water it contains at once loses its identity. The opposite school maintains that the soul ever remains distinct from God, and remains contemplating and praising Him for ever; and the following stanza expresses Tukaram's sentiments as to the impossibility of his ever being able to relinquish the praise of the Almighty:—

XVI.

"At first he was one of Khandoba's mendicants,
By good luck he became a captain of horse;
But his beggar's cry would not stop,
His original nature would not depart.
At first he was a village astrologer,
Then a king's throne fell to his lot;
But his proclaiming of the almanac would not stop,
His original nature would not depart.
At first she was a servant,
Then she became chief queen;
But her running about would not stop,
Her original nature would not depart.
At first Tukâ was the companion of saints,
Then he was identified with Pándurang;
But his repetition of the name of God would not stop,
His original nature would not depart."

XVII.

"Who regards this restless world?
My friends are the people of Hari;
My time passes in musing upon God,
Accumulated pleasure remains.
I have no trouble, not even in dreams;
Night and day pass on.
Tukâ says,—'The fruition of God is a feast of excellent flavour.'"

I had here intended closing my extracts from Sir Alexander Grant's interesting paper, but find it impossible to resist quoting what may be called Tukaram's Farewell, which was supposed to be written just before he was taken up into Vaikunth, the heaven of Vishnu:—

XVIII.

"I am going to my village,*
Accept my farewell.
Till this time I have lived in your village:
Continue to think kindly upon me.

* The word village amongst the Hindoos seems to express all that we mean by the word home, and the natives in Munzerabad used often to ask me when I was going to my village; and, in alluding to my departure for England, I used always to say in Canarese, literally, "I am going to my village."

I have said that the truths contained in the ancient, as well as, comparatively speaking, the more modern writings, and the traditions of which at least are still alive, form a basis from which we can safely build, and I apprehend that it is only the ignorance and the intolerance of man that have hitherto prevented the attempt. Why should we not enlighten the minds of men, and give an impetus to directing thought in the right way? Why should we abstain from advancing truth because it is in a different form, and does not go as far as we could wish? Is not half a loaf better than no bread? And why should not the God of the old Hindoos—the God who is as much theirs as ours—why should not this God be taught in the village school, and through the medium of selections from the best of the Hindoo books? It often happens that a man will take from one hand what he will not even look at when presented by another. We are told in Mrs. Manning's interesting work that during eight long years Mr. L. Wilkinson tried to convince his friend, Subhagi Bâpû, of the sun's relation to the earth. But it was labour in vain. At last, from happening to meet with the old Hindoo astronomical works, he was enabled to show his friend that the Hindoos, centuries ago, had arrived at similar truths. At once was conviction carried to his mind, and Subhagi Bâpû afterwards became a distinguished professor and astronomer at the Government College of Benares. And thus we see that truths, long ago apparently lost for ever, have a tendency to come to the surface, and, directly or indirectly, take their place in pushing on the mental circulation of the world. And it is of those religious truths which have been smothered, not lost, that I would propose to take advantage, with the view of turning the Hindoo mind to a

purer and better faith. Now, these ideas of insinuating, as it were, a purer religion into the minds of men have occurred to many who dare not urge them, or who do not, because they think that the fulness of time has not yet come. But, timidly and tentatively, indications of the coming opinions are cropping up, and before long we shall find numbers declaring as plainly as I do now, that it is our duty to at least attempt to supply our Indian subjects with a religion of some sort, to replace the numberless faiths we have shaken to pieces by our knowledge and our civilisation. We shall find numbers declaring that as the Indians will not have, and do not want, any one of our interpretations of the Bible, it is our imperative duty to see what can be done next; to see, in short, if they will not allow us to teach them their own ancient faith in as pure a form as it was originally held by the most advanced of their forefathers. And in teaching them to know and comprehend these ancient religious opinions I would not, it must clearly be understood, propose for one moment to inculcate the opinions as a faith or as a religious system. I would not add or allow to be added, one word of commentary, but I would simply translate into every vernacular tongue, and in language calculated to be best understood by the simplest of the Indians, collections of sentiments such as those delivered by Tukaram, and I would have these translations taught in every village school, and circulated as widely as possible. I would at least scatter the seed, and I would scatter it as part and parcel of education, in the sense of rousing and exercising the faculties of the mind. For the great thing with these people, as with every other, is to create an appetite and to stimulate curiosity. And, as I have endeavoured to

show in another part of this book, this is only to be done by rousing the attention to things which come home to every man—to things which affect his comfort and happiness, and more particularly concern himself. Of these things it cannot be denied that religion, if not, in fact, the greatest means, is at least one of the principal means of creating an alteration in the habit of thought; and if that means is neglected we shall, I maintain, fail to do as much as we might and ought to do for these people. The reader will now understand why I have laid before him at such length these sentiments which lived of old, but which were repeated with additional force by the Maharatta poet. It is with the view of asking him to put it to himself whether, because we cannot teach the whole of our religion, we should not at least commence with a part, and allow that to develop in whatever direction it may.

To propose that this Christian nation should indirectly teach a pure deism is a notion that may, perhaps, startle a considerable section of society in this country; but if the members of that section will only consider that deism is the only path that can ever lead to Christianity, I feel sure that the objections some might have to the teaching I propose will soon vanish. In short, by teaching deism at once, you would only be doing what our missionaries have indirectly aided to bring about, but without any of the evils they have created, and with far greater rapidity, and at an infinitely cheaper rate. Our missionaries may have imagined that they were propagating real Christianity; but if they did so, I am sure that they were, and are, under a real delusion. They have helped merely to revive and develop that school which, amongst the most advanced, has ever

existed in India from the remotest times; they seem, also, to have produced a large number of infidels; and amongst the lowest classes they have obtained a temporary allegiance to the name of Christ, which would entirely fail to maintain itself were the missionaries to be withdrawn from India. But I need not waste time in pointing out any illustrations of the often-repeated truism, namely, that there is no instance of a debased population ever, when left to themselves, maintaining a pure and simple Christianity. It will be more to the point if we allude to the effect of these missionary enterprises, which have, for the most part, been confined to the convenient humdrum of the school-room. Let us glance for one moment at the effect of this school-room Christianity.

And here it is not my intention to weary the reader with evidences of a fact that is so well known: I mean the fact that education, in the sense of that instruction to be got in our missionary schools, has not aided in any way the immediate propagation of Christianity. But the following facts, which I take from Sir J. E. Tennent's "Christianity in Ceylon," and those which I give in a note further on, will put the reader in possession of a few facts which seem to show that the tendency of our missionary education is to supply a large number of conceited infidels, who are far worse to deal with than pagans, and who, besides, by actively scoffing at all religions, exercise a most pernicious influence on society.

Now, it seems to me that you cannot do a more unsatisfactory piece of work than spend a great deal of money in arriving at such a result; and even if you got the result for nothing, it is very questionable whether it would be worth having, notwithstanding the repeated

assertions that you have done a great deal when you have dislodged a Hindoo from all belief in the religion of his forefathers. But, however the last point may be decided, it seems pretty plain that the result obtained, as shown by facts in the note below, does not justify our missionaries in spending money on education; and if, in future, they will persist in doing so, it seems only fair that they should, at the same time, devote some time in their schools to teaching their Hindoo lads, who will not turn Christians, the best possible form of the old Vedic faith, or, in other words, to teaching a pure deism; for, in that case, the missionaries could at least console themselves that the boys at their schools would not be sent into the world without any religion at all, which, as has been shown, is the commonest result now arrived at. But though, in the Government schools, we may one day hope to see the introduction of deistical books, I am afraid that it is hopeless to expect that our missionaries will ever consent to the admission of what is good as far as it goes, notwithstanding that they must see that, for the present, it is a hopeless thing to attempt anything better.

I have said that the missionary schools made but few Christians.* Now, the fact was known long ago; the

* "The Rev. Howard Malcolm, of Boston, U.S., who, in 1836, made a tour of the missions in Hindoostan and Burmah, in Siam, Malaya, and China, after describing the extent to which education has been carried in their Christian institutions, has thus summed up the inadequate success by which all its labours have been followed as regards conversion to Christianity:—'The proportion of conversions among this mighty host of scholars is certainly very small. It was stated by the late Rev. Mr. Boichardt, of Calcutta, who laboured long in the service of the Church Missionary Society, that of the many thousand boys instructed by this society, only five or six had been converted. At Vepery, a suburb of Madras, where for a hundred years this species of labour had been largely bestowed by the Christian Knowledge Society, the results are scarcely more encouraging; nor at Tranquebar, where schools have been maintained for a hundred and thirty years. In all Madras, where several thousands have been constantly taught in missionary schools, there are not known to be half-a-dozen

evidence given in my note from Sir Emerson Tennent's book was written in 1836, and it is natural, therefore, to inquire why the funds contributed in this country should have been spent so largely in bringing about such results. And here, in answering this question, I am afraid I shall have to bell the cat. To bell any cat is not a pleasant task, but to bell the cat clerical is a thing that I would, if possible, have gladly avoided. However, as I am afraid that I shall have a number of these missionary gentlemen and their supporters down on me in any case, I may as well be hanged for a sheep as a lamb, and I shall therefore devote a little space to an endeavour to clear out this great missionary jungle in India.

To commence, then, with answering the question which naturally arises as to the reasons the missionaries have for sticking to their cantonment schools, in spite of

converted natives. At the Anglo-Chinese College at Malacca, which has existed for twenty years, only a few have been converted, though some twenty or thirty have been brought over to Christianity. In Ceylon, where schools have been conducted for twenty-six years, and generally with more attention to religion than is common in India, few conversions occurred before 1830; and those since that time have been rather the effect of protracted meetings and especial pastoral effort than the school system. Out of the Scotch General Assembly's school in Calcutta, which for six years has had an average of four hundred scholars and the entire and constant attention of two missionaries, there have been but five or six conversions. The Baptist schools in Bengal, numbering thousands of scholars, for more than thirty years past have produced very few conversions. That at Chittagong, taught by a missionary in person every day for sixteen years, with an average of two hundred pupils, has witnessed but two of the scholars brought to a knowledge of the truth. In Arracan no conversion has yet occurred in the schools. Among all the Burmans I know of no Christian who is regarded as the fruit of schools. Among the Karens many scholars have been converted; but the primary and daily object of these schools has ever seemed to be the conversion rather than the education of the scholars. *In places where schools have most abounded, and for the longest time, a considerable number of pupils have rejected heathenism without embracing Christianity, and are now conceited infidels, worse to deal with than pagans. Many of them, by means of their education, have obtained offices under Government, or in commercial houses, and exert a considerable influence against religion.*" — Sir J. E. Tennent's "Christianity in Ceylon," pp. 277-8.

all the evidence we have for asserting that these schools do not lead to conversions, I must inform the public in this country that the sole reason is that the missionaries naturally prefer snug quarters in a cantonment, within reach of a doctor for themselves and their families, to living in isolated situations amongst the simple populations in the rural districts, amongst whom the chances of success would be infinitely greater than they are amongst the people of the towns. Efforts, of course, have been made to dislodge them from the towns; and a friend of mine, a Scotch minister, told me that he once formed one of a small minority which, in the General Assembly, tried to move the missionaries from the towns to the rural districts. But he told me that he and his friends had not the slightest chance of success; and, I confess, I should have thought it a very strange thing if they had. To read about our missionaries in books and to see them at home are very different things; and I well recollect the comfortable bungalow, the snug drawing-room, and all the appearance of a clergyman in easy circumstances, which met my eye when, many years ago, some circumstance caused me to call on a Protestant missionary in Bangalore. And when, added to all this, there is English society to fall back on to while away the evening hours, it is plain that powerful and strong must be the arguments addressed to friends at home in favour of mission-schools in the centres of civilisation. One illustration of this unwillingness of our missionaries to be without European society I may here mention. The facts were communicated to me by an officer of the Mysore Commission, and I can vouch for their accuracy. A good many years ago two Protestant missionaries arrived at the head-quarters of the division where my

friend was then stationed, and asked his advice as to where it would be most advisable to set up a missionary station. This gentleman at once indicated a small native town, or rather large village, where there was a considerable weekly market, which was largely attended by the neighbouring farmers. The missionaries accordingly paid the place a visit, but they soon returned. My friend, when he next saw them, asked them what reception they had met with, and was told that the people were very civil, and even offered to build a school-house if the missionaries would settle amongst them. "And are you going to do so?" said my friend. "Well, no," was the reply; "there is no European society there." And accordingly they set up in the town at the head-quarters of the division, which was a hotbed of Brahmins and Mussulmans; but there was a small English society, and, above all, a doctor. If no other part of the missionary jungle requires clearing, I am sure this does.* But "it's a far cry to Lochow," the missionaries know that, and the people at home do not care; and so the missionary car rumbles on in the same old track, till one day it will be left sticking in the ruts, like some of those idol-chariots which the slumbering Hindoos have left, simply because the zeal which formerly moved them has expired.

There is another point, too, to which the attention of the public here should be directed, and that consists in the tendency that missionaries have to take themselves to other and more lucrative callings. Within my own knowledge one missionary has betaken himself to the Government Educational Department; a second has turned schoolmaster on the Neilgherry Hills; and a

* See Appendix F.

third has invaded my business, and, in short, turned coffee-planter. Now, I have nothing to say against these gentlemen for abandoning their original calling. On the contrary, there is strong presumptive reasoning in their favour, and we may charitably suppose that they abandoned the cause of proselytising on account of the miserable method pursued by those who have the charge and direction of our Indian missions. But their abandonment of their original profession for a more lucrative one cannot but tend to create, or rather to increase, the idea that the missionaries go to India for profit; that they get as much as they can from their trade, and desert it for another the moment a favourable opportunity occurs. Now, without offering any particular opinion as to the motives of these men in going to India, it is evident that their actions must sometimes cause a smell, just as a fly causeth the oil of the apothecary to stink; and I therefore think that every missionary should, for the future, sign an agreement either to retire from India on quitting his mission, or else to abstain from other callings in the country itself.

A third point requiring attention is the luxurious style in which the missionaries live. I do not, of course, mean that they live in a positively luxurious style, taking them to be people pursuing secular callings, but, regarding them as missionaries, their way of living is calculated to produce an effect in the native mind the reverse of what is advisable; and, in short, it is difficult to get the natives to imagine that there is anything particularly sacred in the missionary character, when presented to them in the form of a man who seems to live as comfortably as his neighbours. Not long ago I read in "Mission Life" that a missionary somewhere in the south

of India went about the country with a pony and groom, and actually with a cook. Now, it is alleged that all these comforts are really necessaries of life to a European, and our missionaries assert that they could not exist in India without what would be called comforts, and even luxuries, in other countries. But this is an entire delusion, and, as an instance to show that it is so, I may mention that I once made the acquaintance of a Jesuit priest who was in perfect health. He, of course, had no cook, and his sole servant was his horsekeeper, who boiled the missionary's simple fare; and in going about the country these men live on the food of the country, and, in short, just as the natives do. The salary of this gentleman was, to the best of my recollection, exactly £26 a year, or a sum equal to the pay of the servants employed by one of our missionaries.

Another point deserving of notice is a duty that many missionaries think they must perform, and which they call rebuking idolatry. To people in this country who have not much imagination, or do not trouble themselves to reflect, this may seem a very proper thing to do. But let us suppose that a Chinese missionary had arrived in this country, that he went into the villages* and told the people that Christianity was a snare and a delusion, and was the certain path to perdition, and that they should desist from worshipping false gods, and come over to the religion of Buddha: he would probably be looked upon as an impudent lunatic, be pelted by the boys, and possibly carried to the parish pump. And we may safely assert that, three hundred years ago, his fate under similar circumstances would

* The practice of what is called bazaar-preaching has already been discovered to be a mistake by at least one of our best missionaries.

have been either hanging or drowning. And yet our missionaries in India do much the same thing, and are, I dare say, not a little surprised that they do not wind their way into the affections of the people. When I lived in Mysore I used to take in a missionary journal called the *Harvest Field*, and I there read certainly one of the most original and tasteful ways of rebuking idolatry I ever heard of. One of the missionaries, in giving an account of what he had been doing of late, said that in passing by the village temple he saw a priest engaged in washing the idol, and thinking this a fitting occasion to rebuke idolatry, he said, "Well, yours must be a dirty god to require so much washing."

If the conclusion I have come to as regards the action of our missionaries be well founded, it seems pretty clear that these gentlemen, by devoting so much of their time to education; by living in comfort in the centres of civilisation; by creating an impression, from their way of living, the reverse of what is desirable to establish; and by their system of rebuking idolatry, have succeeded in producing a very unfavourable return for the sums of money intrusted to their charge. And when we take into consideration, further, the pernicious effects they have produced, and the injury they have inflicted on the cause of Christianity by presenting it to the natives* as something that must necessarily tear the whole framework of society to pieces, and interfere with all their social customs, it is plain that a deep and wide-spread reformation of missionary enterprise is urgently needed if people expect to introduce our religion in India. And, in attempting to produce this necessary reform, the first thing to be done, I would venture to

* See chapter on Caste.

suggest, is to sink dogmas and live Christianity. From my intimate experience of these people I feel firmly persuaded that going about on missionary tours, and preaching whenever a few natives can be collected together, is not of the slightest value. A missionary, to be really effective, should locate himself in a part of the country remote from a large town, but where there is a fair population, and he should settle down amongst the people, and cast in his lot with them, putting up at their houses, eating of the family fare, and sleeping on a mat in the verandahs that are commonly to be found in the houses of the more respectable farmers. He should attend to the sick, comfort the afflicted, and spend morning, noon, and night amongst the people, and present himself to them as a man who, forsaking the luxuries and comforts of European life, has resolved to spend his whole time in doing good. And, while acting in this way, he should carefully abstain from offering any opinions on religious matters at all until he is asked for them. Instead of carrying religious dogmas from house to house, and endeavouring to cram them down every man's throat, he should present such an example of excellence as would induce the natives to ask, as assuredly they would do in time, what that religious system could be which was capable of producing men of such exalted self-denial and virtue; and when these questions came, the missionary should then gradually unfold the faith he depended on; he should scatter the seed, and scatter it patiently, remembering that "the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient over it till it shall have received the early and latter rain." Missionary work carried on after this fashion would, I feel well assured,

be of incalculable benefit to the Indians, and would yield in good time an ample return. But, carried on as it is at present, I feel well assured, as I have repeatedly urged, that little good will ever be done to the cause of Christianity, and that the evils that have ensued from our misguided efforts have done, and are at this moment doing, an amount of harm to the cause of Christianity in Asia which it is impossible to exaggerate.

NOTE.—The advisability of living Christianity first of all, and detailing its doctrines afterwards, may not, to the general reader, seem so important as I believe it to be. But whatever may be the case with people who have been bred up in the belief of Christian doctrines, it is plain that when you commence to state them to an acute Hindoo a host of difficulties arise. And, as if there were not sufficient difficulties to be found in the case of the Trinity and of the Virgin Mary, our missionaries seem to be at considerable pains to manufacture fresh ones; and it is quite sufficient to cover any religion with ridicule when you come to preach the resurrection of our earthly and frequently uninhabitable lodgings. I recollect reading of a case in the *Harvest Field*, previously alluded to, where a missionary fell into conversation with a Mussulman on this subject. "What!" said the Mussulman, "do you mean to tell me that this very body of mine is really to rise again from the dead?" Presently the conversation turned on other religious points, and subsequently the missionary observed that this would be a good opportunity for embracing Chris-

tianity. "It may be so," was the answer, "but I'll see about that when I rise from the dead."

The reader, I may observe, will understand better what the Bible says on this subject if he reads, according to Wiclif's translation, "It is sowen a beestli bodi; it shal rise a spiritual bodi," instead of our version of, "It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body." The term "animal body," as Dean Trench points out, should have been used instead of "natural body."

APPENDIX TO VOL. I.

A.—Page 202.

I have since received the Administration Report for Coorg for 1869-70, and with reference to the Registration Act, which was extended to that province in the same year that the act was introduced in Mysore (Coorg, though British, is governed by the Commissioner of Mysore), it is stated that "the bulk of the people must still be ignorant of the purposes or advantages of registration," and that, "on the whole, registration seems to have made but slow progress among the Coorgs." This act was introduced in 1866.

A².—Page 206.

Mr. Bowring's industry, energy, and ability are far too well known to require any remark from me; but the observations I have made on his administration of Mysore might perhaps lead the English reader to suppose that I meant to convey some sort of reflection on his policy, and I therefore think it necessary to add that when I condemn the system he introduced, I am merely offering remarks that may be extended to the whole of British India. Mr. Bowring was, it must be remembered, merely a minister, and to attack him would be very like attacking Mr. Cardwell's administration of the army. As Lord Russell said in his letter to the *Times*, "It is very unfair to blame Mr. Cardwell: he was told to retrench, and he has retrenched." In the same way Mr. Bowring was told to introduce a system, and he did introduce a system.

B.—Page 209.

A Few Facts as regards Indian Government.

I.

The masses in India do not care a straw who governs them as long as they are let alone.

That letting them alone financially is the thing they care most

about; and what worries them more than anything else is the imposition of new taxes.

This is partly owing to an ill-founded objection to new taxes, because they are new, but mainly to a well-founded belief in the fact that every additional kind of tax involves an additional communication with an agent of Government, and that every such additional point of contact will be used as a means of extortion and oppression by the petty native officials.

It is impossible to prevent extortion on the part of the minor officials, and this is an ultimate fact which can never, in our time at least, be altered.

These propositions being assumed, it follows that the Government might raise a million sterling by increasing an old tax with far less unpopularity, and far more cheaply, than it could raise a tenth part of that sum by the imposition of a new tax.

The imposition of new direct taxes of any sort, as the income-tax or local cesses, causes a disturbance in the native mind, and an uneasiness as to what is to come next, which is sure to develop into a chronic state of mistrust, and general discontent with our rule.*

II.

India is a poor country, and can only be made permanently and securely rich by irrigation.

With irrigation everything is possible; without it everything must continue to be precarious.

With irrigation, life may be rendered as safe as it possibly can be; owing to the absence of it, lives have been sacrificed by the million, and may any day have to be sacrificed again.†

* It is, of course, impossible to prove it; but I cannot help suspecting that, quite unconsciously, a fair share of extortion and oppression emanates from our English officials. And I think we may infer deductively that such must be the case, as, whenever the Government is in a strait, the old cry of "Govern leniently, but get more money," is sure to be carried into effect. An educated native official (now retired), who eventually rose to be deputy collector, told me that, with reference to the income-tax, he was instructed by his superiors to get in as much as he could. Finding that he could not show as good a return as his neighbours, he simply issued orders to surcharge every one, and in that way contrived to rival his competitors in extortion. People here would be inclined to censure the conduct of the native in question. I do not. They would also be inclined to ask why complaints were not lodged against the official in question; but those who would be inclined to ask this know little of what goes on in India.

† John Bull, I am sure, has no idea of the loss caused him by Indian famines, or he would have roused himself up long ago, and bestowed on irrigation at least a portion of that stimulus which he has so freely expended on railways. Not to go further back than 1861, I may mention that in that year there was a direct loss of two hundred and fifty thousand lives in the North-west Provinces,

The sacrifice of life means the sacrifice of revenue.

The true base of life and prosperity, therefore, is water.

III.

India being a poor country, the first, and the second, and the third point to be kept steadily in view is to keep down the expenses of the administration.

This cannot be done unless we are content to go without the costly refinements of European administration.

To a neglect of this fact, and to the neglect of irrigation, are to be traced the whole of our present financial difficulties, and a great deal of the unpopularity of our rule in India.

IV.

Our position in India is exactly like that of a man who has enormously over-estimated the resources of his estate, and who, not liking to retrench, is grasping wildly at all manner of straws with the view of keeping his head above water.

The straws that Government is grasping at in India are more railways, and more departments (as agricultural and cotton departments) for developing the resources of the country.

The whole of this straw-grasping will break down; a general increase of the land-tax must inevitably follow. The masses—or, in

and Colonel Baird Smith estimated the losses arising therefrom at four and a half millions sterling. In 1866 we had the Orissa famine, with a loss of seven hundred and fifty thousand lives, and a famine in the Madras territory to the extent of two hundred thousand. The Rajpootana famine of 1868-69 has been computed at one million. These losses, amounting in all to two million two hundred thousand deaths from direct starvation, must have caused an enormous money loss to India, and I leave the public here to calculate how much these people would have spent in cotton stuffs had they not thus been cleared off the face of the earth.

We are always boasting of the superior safety of life under our rule in India, but the fact is that our rule has made life more insecure than ever it was before. We have saved a few people from the Thugs and from Dacoits in general, but we have, by our culpable neglect, slaughtered millions as effectually, and far more miserably than if we had ordered them to be put to the sword outright. In this way we have got rid of nearly two millions and a quarter in ten years, and if we have seasons equally dry (and no one can tell that we may not have seasons even worse), we may, no doubt, succeed, by 1881, in making up the number to about four millions and a half. It is probable, however, that this number will be exceeded, as, from the facilities given by the opening up of roads, many countries in which a famine would have been well-nigh impossible are now in considerable danger. Mysore is one of these. Twenty years ago a famine could hardly have occurred there. Now a famine may occur any year, from values being hoarded in cash instead of being hoarded in grain, as they used to be. (*Vide* pp. 79, 80.) If we could only make John Bull see that famines do not pay!

other words, the agricultural classes—will be impoverished in order that multitudinous officials may fatten, and the general progress of the country will be indefinitely retarded.

V.

For purposes of comparison, the student of Indian affairs need not go farther than the single province of Mysore, with its four millions of inhabitants. This state is quite large enough for this purpose, and its transference from one sort of government to another within very recent times enables us to show most conclusively the fatal tendencies of our system of administration. What these tendencies are has been shown, and if these tendencies are correctly stated, it follows that those who govern India are not statesmen; that they have failed to grasp the leading points of the situation; and that they are, in a word, merely short-sighted departmentalists.

VI.

The Government shows signs of distress. It is at last beginning to discover that it would have been better to have gnawed patiently the bone that has fallen to its lot, instead of trying suddenly to force the country into prosperity by profuse expenditure. It has just awakened to the fact that there is a "wolf behind, a precipice in front." Under these trying circumstances it is interesting to observe the movements of the unwieldy machine. Some wonderful effect is to be produced by decentralising the finances, by levying local cesses, and by a profuse outpouring of departmental oil.* All this, I dare say, will impose on that most gullible of animals, the British public; but it will never, remember, make a rich country out of a poor one—it will never turn a country with wages at two shillings a week into one with wages at two shillings a day.

VII.

It is, of course, ridiculous to expect people in this country to take a permanent interest in India while there are so many interests at

* The last outpouring of this oil is the appointment of Dr. Day to look after Indian fishes in general. This is no doubt a good move, but the thin end of the wedge once in, and it is merely a question of time as to when we shall have a Fish Department. This will just add another stone to the cairn. The fact is that, in a poor country like India, every civilian should look after his own fish. But the most serious danger of this increase of departments lies in the fact that each department is sure in the end to acquire a certain amount of independent action. Now, the head of a special department can see his department's interests very clearly, but he can see nothing else, and it must therefore surely happen that measures right, perhaps, in the abstract, but hostile nevertheless to our rule, will be carried out. As an instance of this see note, page 221.

home, and nearer home, to absorb the public attention. An occasional effort, however, may reasonably be expected just to keep the vessel off the rocks; and if ever there was a time when such an effort was needed, it is at the present moment. To attempt to arouse this sordid nation to even an occasional sense of its duties—to hope for one moment to obtain a hearing for the peoples of India as the peoples of India, is, of course, not to be thought of. I do not appeal to any sense of honour or of duty, or to any of those principles which, I believe, once animated the people of England; but I appeal to that sense of the almighty dollar which is now the predominant, and, I fear, the extinguishing passion in this country. Nor do I think that I shall appeal in vain when I tell the English people here that cotton, and selling markets, and railway shares, and shipping, and a host of moneyed interests besides, depend upon our pursuing an administrative policy exactly the reverse of what we are now carrying out in India.

VIII.

What, let me ask in conclusion, is the natural sequence of progress in governing the peoples of India? We all know that the best system of government is that where the people hold the direction of their affairs. In India not only can this model never be reached for many generations, but there is absolutely no means whatever by which the people can make their wishes known to Government; nor have they even a press which is informed as to how carefully, or rather how carelessly, their revenues are spent. The English press is just as much without sources of information as the Government itself, and its reach hardly extends beyond the bounds of the Presidency towns. Under these desponding circumstances we are driven to ask what is to be done, and what is the best available method of getting the people represented, and their true interests attended to. And here we are forced to the conclusion that, in the inapplicability of all true principles of government, the only person who can possibly approach to a representative of the people is the revenue collector. The interests of the people lie in the economical development of the resources of the country, and his objects are exactly identical with these interests. In India the revenue administrator should be king over all things, small and great, within the section of country committed to his charge—over roads, over education, over irrigation works, over forests, over every subject connected with the material progress of the people. When this base is in any way departed from, it should be modified, not by splitting up this central authority into those disjointed fragments which are called departments, but by surrounding the central authority by a council selected from the leading natives in the country. To jump from a paternal govern-

ment to a departmental one, without any representation of the people, is an absurdity. Departments ought only to exist where they can be kept under control by the representatives of the people. The proper sequence of Indian government may be summed up as follows:—

1. In the first instance the government should be paternal,* and entirely under the control of the revenue authorities, or, in other words, the administrators of the lands of the people.

2. The next step should be to surround this central authority with a council as representative of the people.

3. When, in the course of time, the representative principle has become sufficiently strong and intelligent to exercise a regular influence on the conduct of affairs, then departments should be started with powers more or less independent.

What, lastly, let us ask, is the tendency of our method of governing on the character of the people? Well, in a word, the whole tendency is to make the people daily more dependent, daily more incapable of looking after or thinking for themselves. In former times they did all their own law through the simple agency of punchayets; they collected their own taxes; they turned out *en masse* to execute their own irrigation works. Now they are exactly like children who expect the Government to do everything. Is not the history of the French before us? They have had everything done for them, and look at the result. Years ago, when an idol chariot stuck fast at a feast I was present at, one of the natives said to me quite seriously, "Why doesn't the Sircar (Government) cause the chariot to be pulled?" Thirty years ago that never could have been said. And yet we say that the people have progressed!

C.—Page 255.

I have procured from Germany a pamphlet entitled "The Position of the Leipsic Missionary Society on the Caste Question, 1861," which should be consulted by any one desirous of examining the

* Mysore, up to the introduction of that Public Works Department which Sir Mark Cubbon vainly strove against, was an instance of a model Indian Government under central authorities rising one above another, each authority being complete within itself. That base has been split asunder, and look at the result. There was good hope at one time that Mysore might have been allowed to progress in the natural sequence I have described as being the proper one for India and that it might have always continued to exhibit a model of Indian government. But the introduction of the first department was the beginning of the end, and the province has been practically swept into the imperial gutters. This may seem a strong term, but in reality it is not half strong enough. In fact, to my mind, the history of our rule in India for the last ten years has been one vast gutter filled with the blood of millions slaughtered by famine, by tumble-down barracks, by money misapplied from one end of the country to the other.

question thoroughly. The opinion of the society is entirely in favour of compromise.

E.—Page 291.

The whole of the facts and quotations regarding the Hindoo religion are taken from Mrs. Manning's valuable work, "Ancient and Mediæval India."

F.—Page 314.

From information subsequently received, I am led to believe that in the northern parts of India, where railways have afforded greater facilities for missionary inspectors, the missionaries do not stick quite so much to the stations as they do in the south. The case in all the southern parts of India is really very bad, and I am informed, by an officer in the Royal Engineers, that to his certain knowledge the missionary societies have bought several houses in Belgaum within recent years. Here the climate is good, and there seems to be a regular colony of missionaries, who can hardly be got into the districts at all, and who remain quietly adding to the white population of the station. For every child they succeed in producing, they obtain an increase of salary, instead of having their pay reduced, as one would naturally expect; for it is evident that "charity will hardly water the ground if it has first of all to fill a pool," and that the more children a man has, the more incompetent he naturally becomes. The fact is that the missionaries should never marry, or, if they do, their pay should be regularly reduced with every child above the number of, say, two or three. Another thing is that, as my engineer informant very justly observed, "a missionary should never show himself inside a station at all."

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